

EXCLUSIVE DRAGON FRIENDS SCENARIO!

# DRAGON+



## MORDENKAINEN'S TOME OF FOES

Neverwinter  
Goes TRPG!

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

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ISSUE 18

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# DRAGON+ 18

## Welcome to Issue 18

It's time we crossover into 2018



## Imagining the Ampersand

Artist Vance Kelly on sketching legendary character Mordenkainen and adding to his backstory.



## Preview: Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes

Mike Mearls and Ben Petrisor  
take us inside the mind of



## Dragon Classic

From the Dragon archives, we  
look back at wizards and devils.  
And wizardly, devilish orbs.



Greyhawk's most famous wizard, as they preview his latest work...

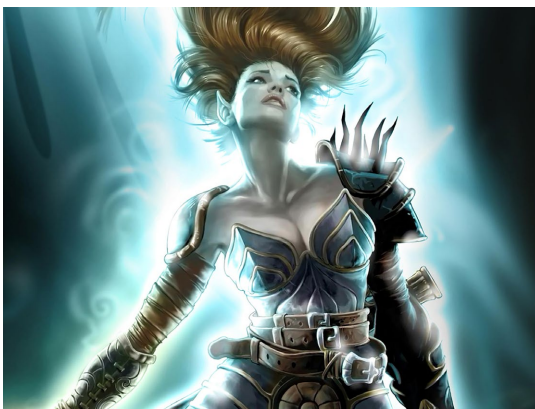
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## Fiction: Rancor

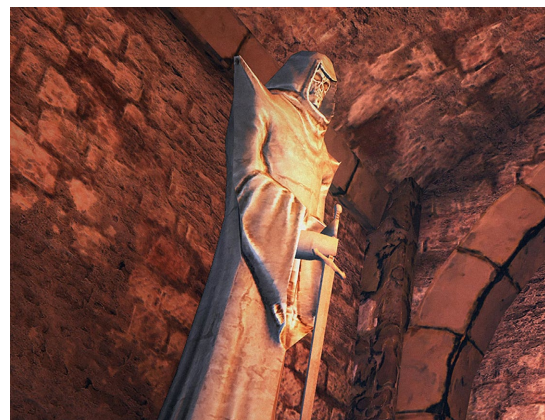
Dave Gross offers the following tale, featuring one of Beamdog's latest companions in the Baldur's Gate series—the half-orc, Dorn!

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## Doing It For The Fans

We chat with Beamdog's Jonathan Hill and Trent Oster about vibrant communities and modern-day mods.



## Neverwinter Goes TRPG

Pit your table top characters against the Crypts of Kelemvor quest from the Neverwinter MMORPG!





## The Gribbits Detective Agency

Writers David Harmon and Ben Jenkins bring the Dragon Friends podcast to your tabletop.



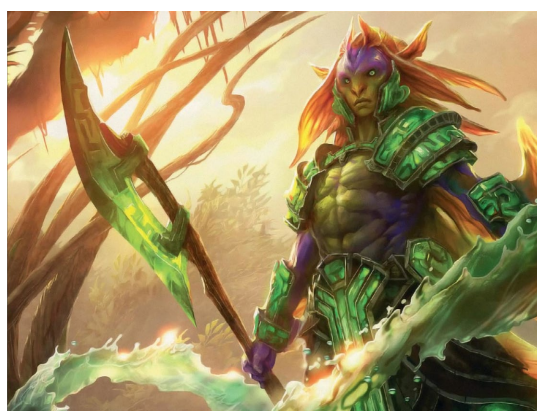
## Dragonfire: Warlock's Crypt

An exclusive *Dragonfire* adventure for *Dragon+* readers!



## The Best of the Dungeon Masters Guild

Our Guild Adepts share their tips for collaborating across multiple projects.



## Plane Shift: Ixalan

Journey to Ixalan, as D&D crosses over into the world of *Magic: The Gathering*.



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## Comic: Port Nyanzaru

Artist Jason Thompson's latest detailed map drops a literal party of adventurers into Chult's carousing Port Nyanzaru!



## Behind the Screen: Lessons from Live Play

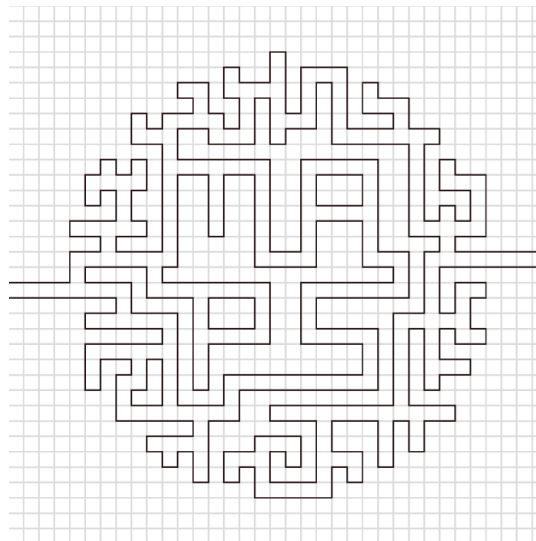
Ethan Gilsdorf on how watching D&D streams can improve your home game.



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## Unearthed Arcana: Into The Wild

Mike Mearls introduces new ways to approach outdoor exploration...



## Maps of the Month

Further maps from Tomb of Annihilation, plus a look back at Out of the Abyss!





## Next Issue: Dragon+ 19

Check out this preview of Issue  
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# DRAGON+ 18

## Welcome to Issue 18

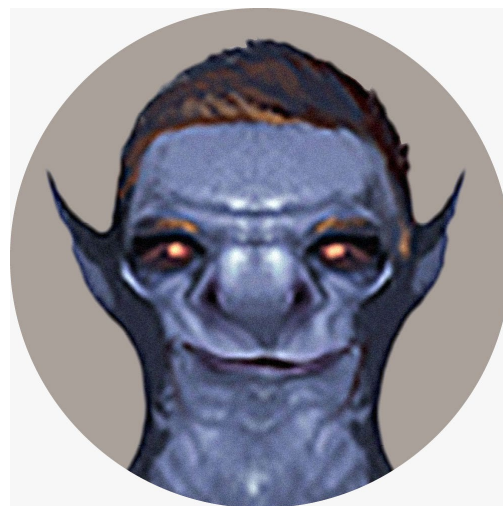
It's time we crossover into 2018

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Last June, I brought my son to our Stream of Annihilation production. Maybe I wanted to impress him a little bit, or at least showcase what kept daddy working so late, especially in the last few weeks leading up to the event.

The production room (“video village”) looked like something straight out of the Death Star, and massive boom cameras were zooming around down on the soundstage. But it was when we ran into Matthew Lillard that a real sense of excitement hit Quinn.

“That’s Shaggy!” I told him (just as excited as he was).



You see, our household has already devoured *Mystery Incorporated* (a great cartoon series; they even ran a D&D-themed episode, *Web of the Dreamweaver*), and both live-action *Scooby Doo* movies were still in heavy rotation (written by James Gunn no less).

At first, this tall figure standing before us may have been a little confusing out of context, but then Matthew Lillard broke out the Shaggy voice for him, and boy did Quinn’s eyes go wide.

Appropriate for this issue, I’ll mention that a crossover *Scooby Doo* cartoon released last month transported the occupants of the Mystery Mobile into *Batman: The Brave and the Bold* (another series I heartily recommend). It’s not the first *Scooby Doo* crossover, which

through the years has included LEGO, the WWE, KISS, an earlier incarnation of Batman, the Harlem Globetrotters, the list goes on... Of course, Batman's had his own share of crossovers, at various times facing off not just against Penguin and the Joker, but also Judge Dredd, Archie, and a recent run-in with a reimagined Elmer Fudd.

Myself, I'm a huge fan of pressing against these porous membranes between universes. Crossover events, unexpected guest stars, genre-blending—to me, it's all wonderful alchemy that can produce such results as *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*, *Marvel vs. Capcom* fighting games, a William “The Refrigerator” Perry G.I Joe action figure, and the excitement of seeing that Alien skull appear in the *Predator 2* spaceship. (Batman, I should note, also faced off against both Aliens and Predator). I loved Alan Moore's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* in both concept and execution, and so also love *Idle Champions of the Forgotten Realms*, which pulls in characters from various D&D games and livestreams.

This issue, we wanted to consider a few of our own crossovers, inspired in part by the most recent *Magic: the Gathering* Plane Shift article (further explored this issue). We also converted a *Neverwinter* MMO scenario, and translated a Dragon Friends livestream encounter, both into tabletop play. Stretching the theme a bit, we also continue converting our adventures (in this case, *Tomb of Annihilation*'s Port Nyanzaru) into cartoon form.

Outside of *Dragon+*, when it comes to our ongoing livestreaming, we'll continue to promote and encourage all of the guest starring and crossing over into one another's games as well—including Matthew Lillard's recent appearance in *Dice, Camera, Action!*

Because, as mentioned, Matthew Lillard is awesome.

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## Imagining the Ampersand

Artist Vance Kelly on sketching legendary character Mordenkainen and adding to his backstory.

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“I didn’t realise that they were going to let me illustrate Gary Gygax’s character! That was really cool,” says Vance Kelly, who has created the cover for *Mordenkainen’s Tome of Foes*, which also graces this edition of *Dragon+*. “I did some sketches and then had to go back and do some research on Mordenkainen just to see what he looked like. They sent me two pieces of existing art: the one from Greyhawk; and one where he’s looking over the castle and the orb, which is a really great illustration. And of course they had

some more illustrations from back at TSR, and some other black and white images. But I was pretty close and they only had some really small comments about his looks and his staff, and I had Kelly is perhaps best known for his work on alternative posters for Marvel and a couple of movie houses, although he got his start doing gig posters and album covers. Yet he didn't simply capture the essence of Mordenkainen, he added to the wizard's look with a scar that asks a very big question.

"I also drew that scar. Pain is temporary and glory lives forever—wasn't it Evel Knievel who said that? Scars make you look tough, I guess. So they let me give him a little one over his eye. I thought that gave him an angle—I mean, who is powerful enough to give Mordenkainen a scar? That *had* to be an epic tale."

### Is this your first time working with D&D?

This is my first project for them and a dream come true. My mother had bought me all the D&D handbooks when I was at elementary school, and I was too young to play but I absolutely loved the illustrations. Those books were a true inspiration, alongside album covers and comics like *Savage Sword of Conan*.

### Was there one piece of your work Wizards of the Coast had seen which convinced them to choose you to create this cover?

I'm not really sure. Adam [Smasher] is the owner of Hero Complex Gallery and I do a lot of my movie stuff with him. We were having a conversation one day about how cool D&D is and just going back through the old artwork. Then he called me the next week and was like, 'Hey man, I was able to make contact with Wizards of the Coast and I got you a gig.' I was like, 'Are you kidding me!' So I'm not sure what he showed them or what magic he did to pull it off but of course I'm grateful.

This was by far one of the most fun projects I've ever had. They had a couple of things they wanted to see but other than that they let me do what I wanted and I got to draw some of my favourite models from my childhood, like the hook horror, the mind flayer and the displacer beast. I think anybody who's an artist or who illustrates, it's impossible not to have some sort of D&D reference or inspirational story from their childhood. It's a constant wealth of source material for your imagination.





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You list yourself as an illustrator, fine artist, printmaker and graphic designer. Which process did you use for this cover?

I started off with some pencil sketches. I was born in the '70s and obviously computer-aided design was in its infancy at that time, so I learned to draw using watercolour crayons and slowly moved into gouaches and other stuff. Then I guess in the late '90s, early 2000s, I started working with Photoshop and fell in love with it. Just because of the nature of the work and being able to turn projects around very quickly, I work 100% digitally these days. I still find time to sketch on paper with a pen when I get the chance.



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Is that how this cover started, as a sketch?

I normally use a Wacom Cintiq and sketch digitally, then use the pencil tool in Photoshop and flesh out what looks good. I can change the composition and work in layers so I can adjust stuff on the fly. I approached it like that and it was more like a silk-screen poster. I used a limited colour palette because I find that when I use too many colours I have a harder time, so if it's a smaller palette then I can



focus on the rendering and shading.

How long does it usually take from initial sketch to final piece?

It wildly depends. We did a poster for *The Witch* and I think I started it on Friday and it was done by Saturday night. But then sometimes these illustrations can take me months. It really depends if there's any difficulty in some of the illustrations or if I'm unfamiliar with something. Cityscapes take forever, obviously. And if I do a big wide-open nature scene, capturing all the trees and the valleys takes a lot longer. But if it's a strong character piece with one or two elements, I can produce that fairly quickly.



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### How long did Mordenkainen take?

They gave me a little leeway but it was probably about a month in total. Basically, that was just sending off sketches and then they were pretty quick to reply... obviously with art direction they know what they want to see and they also knew what I was capable of and where my comfort zones were. They were able to let me go wild in those

areas, which was really nice.



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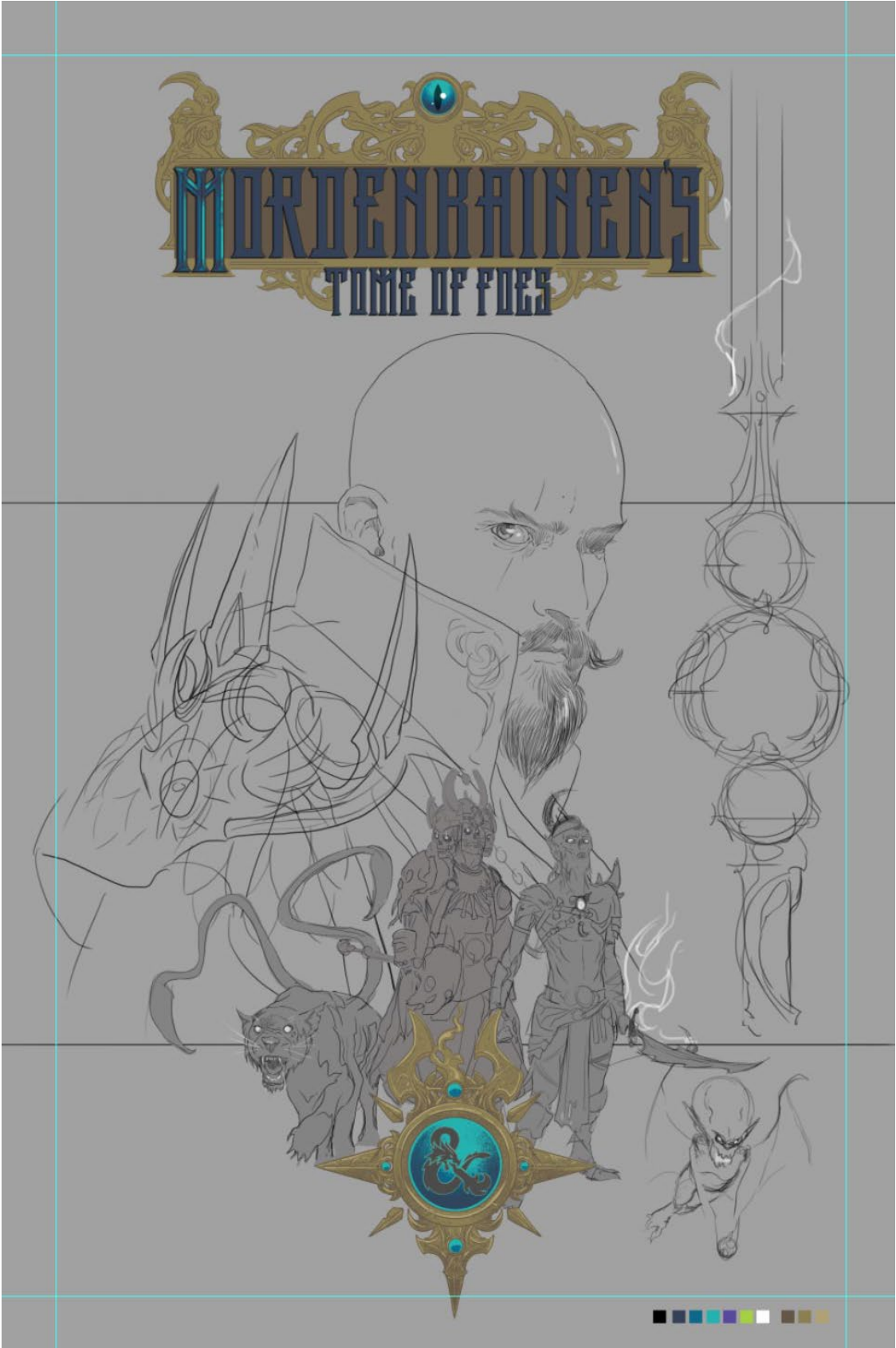
Aside from the creatures on the front of the book, are there any you'd



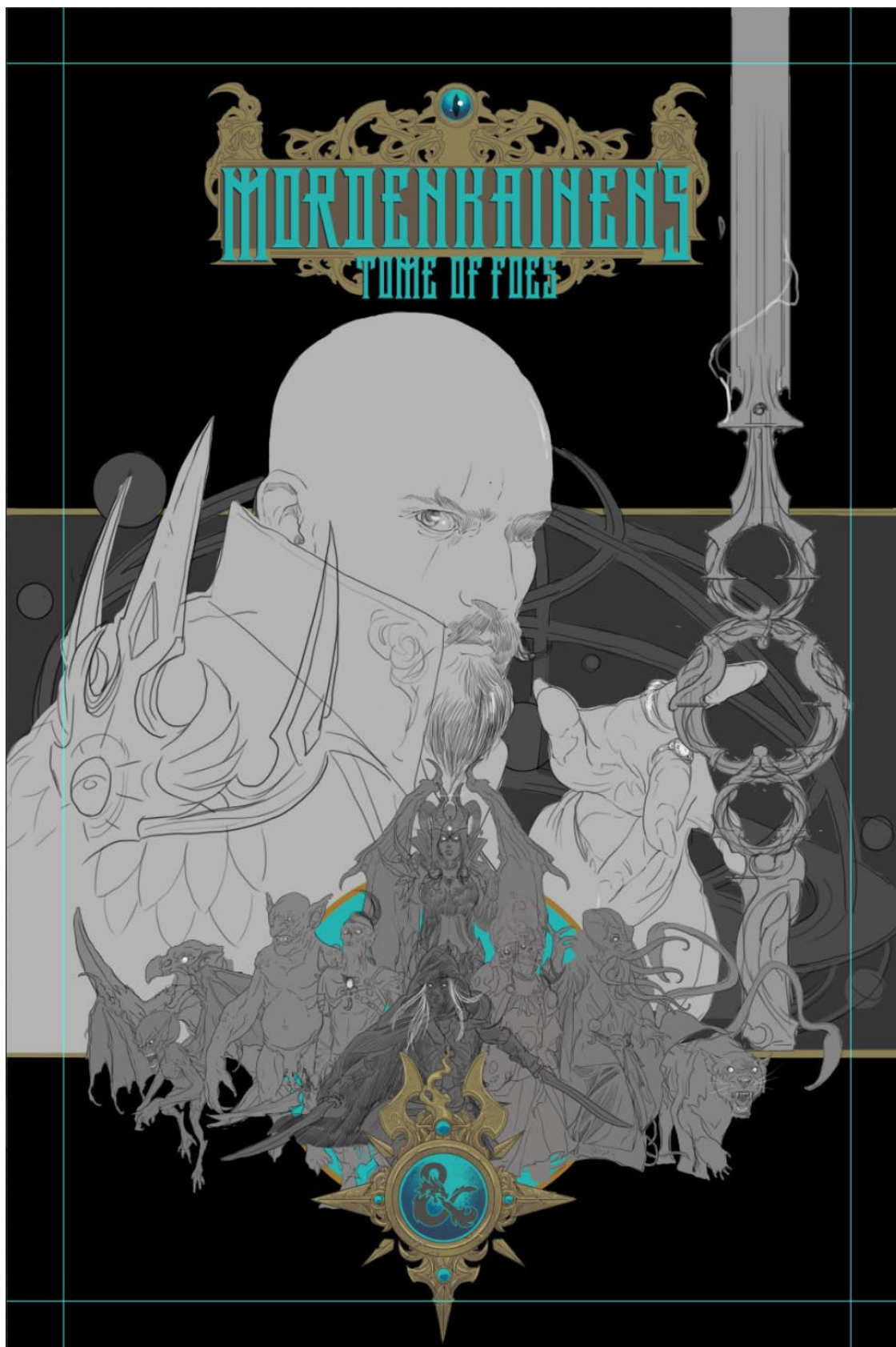
still like to draw?

I'd love to have a crack at beholders, the lich kings—anything dead and creepy as I'm more of a sci-fi kind of horror guy. But being able to draw the mind flayer and the displacer beast was amazing.

Although there's always a few characters I'd like to go back and do one of these days.

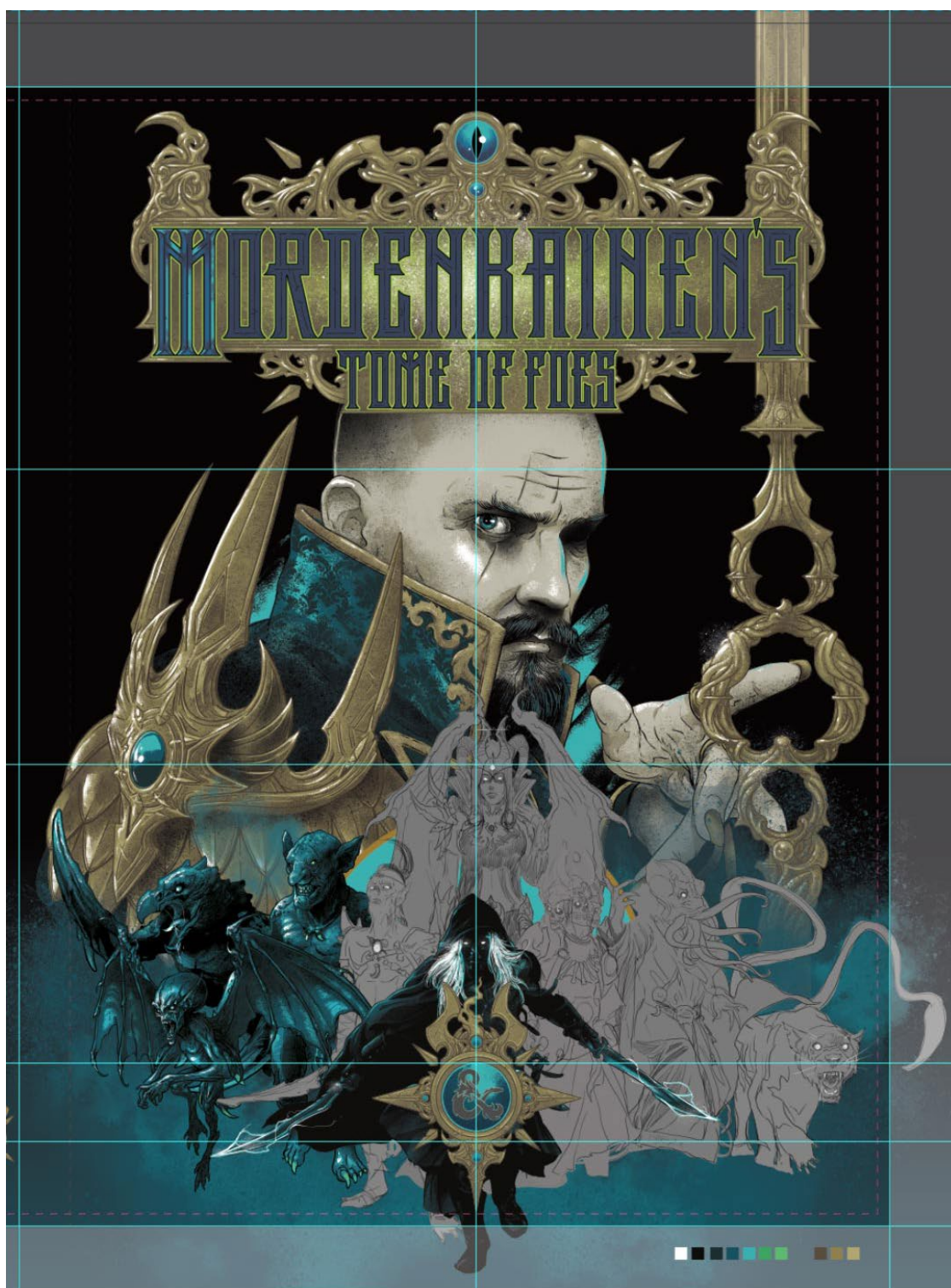


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Mordenkainen is pictured within an orrery. Was that a real item or did you draw it from an image?

They actually requested the orrery behind him. After watching *Tomb Raider* and seeing Daniel Craig jumping around on one for years, I hadn't realised that was what an orrery was! So I did a bit of research and then played around with what I thought would be cool.



(Select to view)

### When did you first play D&D?

We first played when I was at junior high. This was back when you'd Xerox your own character sheets. I was still developing my skills so I would spend half the game just drawing everybody's character, and I hardly got to play. But that was actually really good because it gave me a strong sense of character concept.

To see more of Vance Kelly's work, visit his [official website](#).

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## Preview: Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes

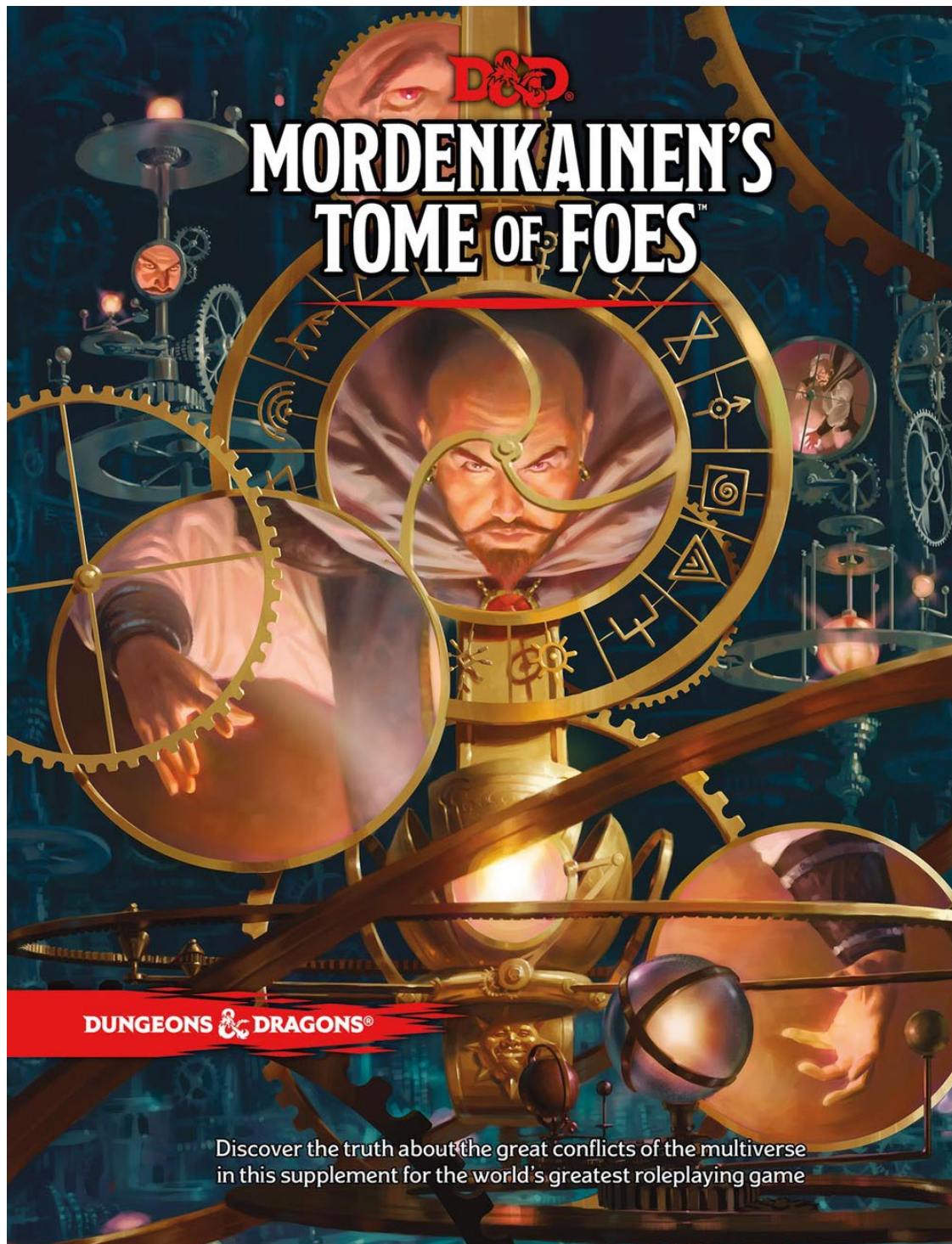
The team behind this monstrous book take us inside the mind of Greyhawk's most famous wizard.

“A book; especially a large or scholarly one.” That’s the definition of a tome, and when Mordenkainen sets down his thoughts, you can be sure it applies. Taking its lead from *Volo’s Guide to Monsters*, which detailed creature lore, playable races and a bestiary through the eyes of that intrepid explorer, *Mordenkainen’s Tome of Foes* also includes plenty of the legendary wizard’s character.

“It’s not just a book of monsters and lore,” reveals Mike Mearls. “We really get inside the head of Mordenkainen, as this wizard from the world of Greyhawk is intently interested in the cosmic-level conflict that rages within the world of D&D.”



“A lot of what Mordenkainen does is look into the past and try to understand how the cosmos works, and to understand the different folk—both good and evil—and view them all as potential threats. Evil is the more immediate threat but eventually if good grows too powerful then that’s also bad for the cosmos.”

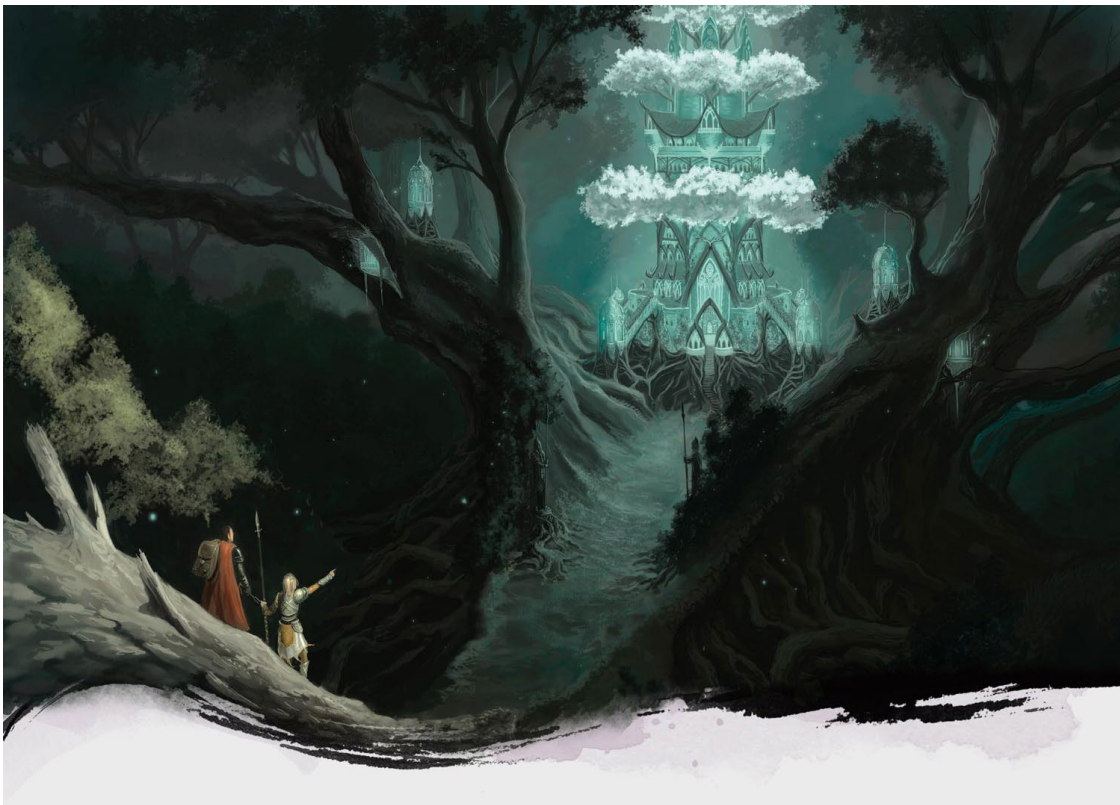


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Mearls explains that Mordenkainen adheres to a concept called “the balance”, which believes that the forces of good and evil in the universe must be kept in strict harmony. If one gets too strong, it will essentially undermine the cosmic order, and even a force for good will eventually turn selfish.

“Mordenkainen believes that if lawful good became the dominant force to the point where it could defeat all the others, it would be beneficial in the short term but it’s just a matter of time before it turns into tyranny. Eventually the chaotic good people would be the ones being sent to prison. The evil alignments are called evil for a reason, because they’re selfish and destructive, but Mordenkainen’s beliefs are that any alignment which grows too powerful will eventually be so self-absorbed and so self-interested that every other faction and group will suffer.”



(Select to view)

## HISTORY LESSON

With that in mind, the *Tome of Foes* details the mythic history of elves, dwarves, gnomes, halflings, the githyanki and githzerai, and

those touched by the Blood War between demons and devils. All these factions have been identified as powerful cross-planar groups by Mordenkainen. Either for their ambition—like the devils who live in the Nine Hells but seek to extend their power everywhere—or because they're so ubiquitous they form a powerful block.

“Every world in D&D has elves in some form,” says Mearls. “They might not be as organized as the devils, with a strict hierarchy, but their numbers are so vast and their gods are so powerful that they're a force to be reckoned with.

“*Tome of Foes* is presented both as a history and a guide. It touches on the mythology of these different groups, while also focusing on the psychology behind them—how they think, how they operate, why they are the way they are. Each section starts out very grounded, like a book of mythology that's a good read. Then we provide more gameable elements, such as tables of names and other tools that make it easier for a Dungeon Master to apply the material to their game.”

“*Tome* fleshes out several big enemies, including demons and devils. The book gives greater context as to their place in the multiverse, so players can gain a greater understanding of how you could run campaigns with them, and the type of stories they excel at telling,” adds Ben Petrisor, Game Producer at Wizards of the Coast.





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## BIGGER BY DESIGN

Big enemies is certainly a theme of *Tome of Foes*. A lot of the creatures in *Volo's Guide* were aimed at levels 1-10. Here the team, led by Jeremy Crawford and Mike Mearls, wanted at least half of the monsters to be challenge rating 10 or higher, with a number of them being challenge rating 20 or higher.

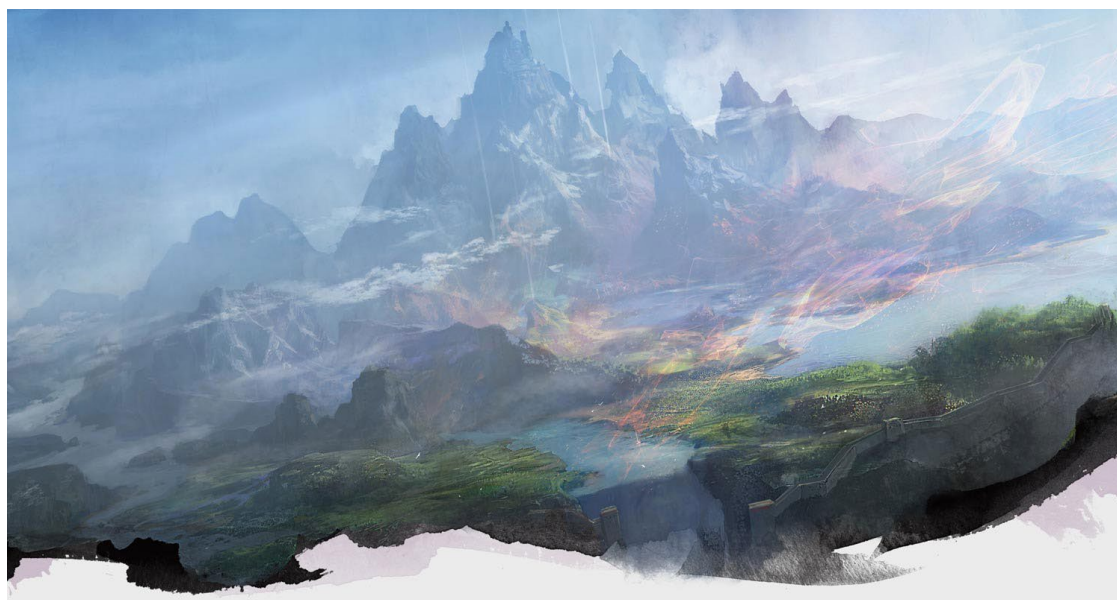
“A lot of these monsters are very powerful, while the ones that are challenge rating 20 or higher are almost Godzilla-type monsters. When they show up, it's world changing,” says Mearls. “Part of that plays into the character of Mordenkainen, where those are the kind of threats he would want to study and understand, because he would be concerned about these threats to the balance. That was good for us because we know players want that kind of material but it also fitted his profile.”

“Multiple styles are explored through these creatures,” adds Petrisor. “From gothic fantasy to—my favorite—cosmic horror! I think players will be inspired by all the stories they can weave with these monsters.”

Meanwhile, Mordenkainen himself is most closely associated with Greyhawk, but the book as a whole has a much wider reach. Its multi-planar material touches upon numerous other worlds, although it only focuses on specific locations if they're locations in the planes.

“*Tome of Foes* doesn't take players through settings per se, although it does give them material and insight to multiple planes, including the Shadowfell, the Nine Hells and a certain extraplanar city,” says Petrisor.

“It really applies to the D&D cosmos as a whole. As an example, we don't give you any detail on a specific dwarf nation, but dwarves in Dragonlance, dwarves in the Forgotten Realms, dwarves in Greyhawk all get a section. In contrast, we do give details of the city of the githyanki. Because no matter which setting you're on, you could travel there, so we see that as being more universally useful,” says Mearls.



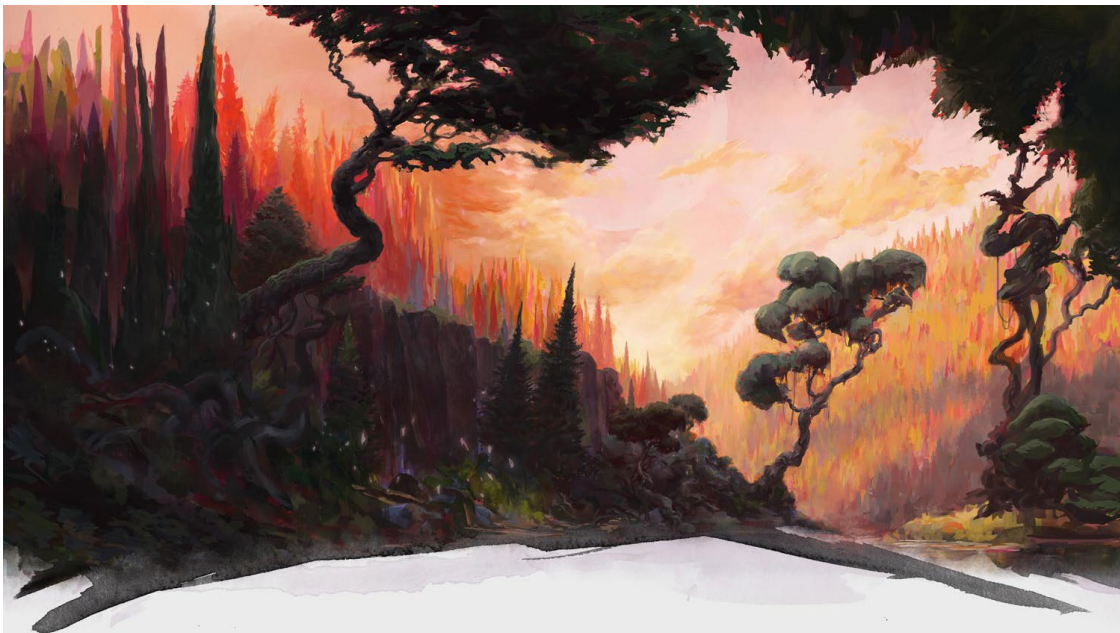
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## RACE UPDATES

Mearls also confirms that several chapters feature stats for the various races, some of which have been playtested in *Unearthed Arcana*. “So if you want to play a githyanki or a githzerai, then that material's in there, along with sub-races for other species. There are also rules if you want to have a creature that's attached to a specific demon lord, or perhaps a little mechanical flourish you can attach to a troll as a devotee of Demogorgon, which gives it a special ability.”

With so many new races to officially roleplay in fifth edition, is it possible to choose a favorite?

“I like all of them! But, if I had to pick, it would be the eladrin,” says Petrisor. “Being from the feywild, they bring a type of whimsy and spontaneity to my characters that I haven’t really experienced before. The feywild is a really expressive place, so distilling that into a character and being able to change like the seasons has been a blast.”



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## TOME OF FOES

With monster stats making up around half of the book, there’s plenty in *Mordenkainen’s Tome of Foes* to trouble even the strongest party. As part of this exclusive preview, we present three enemies that showcase the astral nature of the wizard’s studies, as well as his love of big, bad, world-shaking creatures.





Geryon (Select to view)

Once ruler of Stygia, fifth layer of the Nine Hells. Geryon appeared back in the first edition *Monster Manual*, sadly falling from power by second edition's *A Paladin in Hell* adventure (expanding upon that glorious *Player's Handbook* illustration). Here, Geryon persists as a

deposed Duke of Hell, a gigantic devil 10 feet tall and 30 feet long. He is filled with hate, angry at his predicament, but driven to reclaim his mantle.

A few further details suggest:

- Geryon has a composite body. His head is human, torso furred like that of a bear, and in place of legs he has a long serpent's tail. Geryon's head is handsome, attractive, with long, flowing hair. His torso is muscled and covered in black fur. His arms end in clawed paws. His tail is serpentine, covered in black scales, and ends at a sharp stinger that drips venom.
- Geryon carries a great horn wrapped in iron, featuring minotaur imagery, which he sounds to summon a hoard of minotaurs.
- Geryon attacks with his claws and stinger. He usually grabs prey with his paws and tears them to pieces while injecting them with venom.



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Inevitables appeared in third edition's *Manual of the Planes* as a series of constructs created to enforce cosmic contracts. Among them, the marut extends back even further to second edition's *Monstrous Compendium* series. They are single-minded entities who punish those individuals looking to avoid death and prolong their lives indefinitely.

Their description states: maruts stand 10 feet tall with a thickset muscular body, with dark gray skin as if made from granite. A contract written in arcane light is stamped on a marut's chest.





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Let's end with one of *Mordenkainen's* larger creatures. Anyone picking up first edition's *Manual of the Planes* certainly remembers the awesome astral dreadnaught gracing its cover (an image repeated on the fourth edition version of the book). A massive monster found on the Astral Plane, it is a ravenous destroyer, driven by its appetites to devour anything it can catch. From its description:

- An astral dreadnaught is massive, about 50 feet tall and half as wide. The dreadnaught has a muscular body bristling with spikes. Its head emerges from the torso equipped with two powerful arms ending in pincer-like appendages. Its body tapers down to a long tail that trails behind it and seems to stretch off into infinity.
- The creature has one eye above a wide, slivering maw filled with teeth. The dreadnaught emits a cone of anti-magic that negates magical effects in its area.
- The monster should appear hungry and on the attack.

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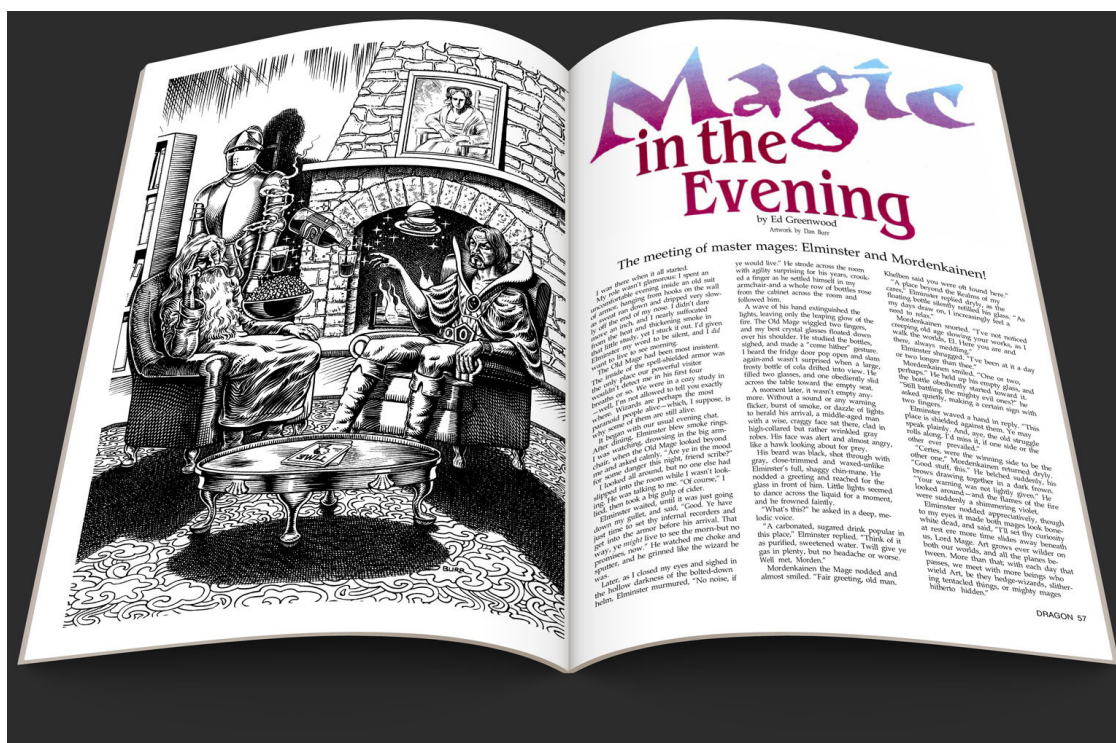




# Dragon Classic

From the Dragon archives, we look back at wizards and devils. And wizardly, devilish orbs.

## Magic in the Evening



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Elsewhere in the issue, we previewed *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*. So for this issue's look back through the pages of *Dragon Magazine*, we wanted to explore Mordenkainen's earlier appearances. Starting

with *Dragon* #185 (September 1992), Ed Greenwood penned the first of his “Magic in the Evening” articles, eavesdropping on the muses of various spellcasters—Mordenkainen included.

*I was there when it all started. My role wasn’t glamorous: I spent an uncomfortable evening inside an old suit of armor, hanging from hooks on the wall as sweat ran down and dripped very slowly off the end of my nose. I didn’t dare move an inch, and I nearly suffocated from the heat and thickening smoke in that little study, yet I stuck it out. I’d given Elminster my word to be silent, and I did want to live to see morning.*

Including new spells and magic items, “Magic in the Evening” also introduced us to the alhoon—mind flayers “who have defied elder-brains to achieve lichdom, becoming ‘illithiliches.’”

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# The Nine Hells

## Dragon Anniversary: Return to the Nine Hells

By Rich Baker  
Illustrations by Jack Crane, Anne Stokes, Warren Mahy, Daarken, Carl Frank, Thomas M. Baxa, Eric Deschamps, and Dave Allsop

In 1983, Ed Greenwood laid out the D&D game’s first great vision for extraplanar adventure in a two-part article appearing in *Dragon* issues 75 and 76. Before “The Nine Hells” articles, all that we knew about Hell in the world of *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* is that it had nine levels and was home to the race of devils (and a few stray lawful evil gods). But in *Dragon* 75, Ed Greenwood took us all on an unforgettable tour, filled with vistas of infernal grandeur and dozens of the most fully realized villains to be found anywhere in the multiverse. It all began with a wonderful full-page illustration of two heroes standing over the smoking corpse of a barbed devil, and perhaps the biggest, boldest, and most purely epic call to action ever written for a D&D game: *I ride on the Hells tomorrow.*

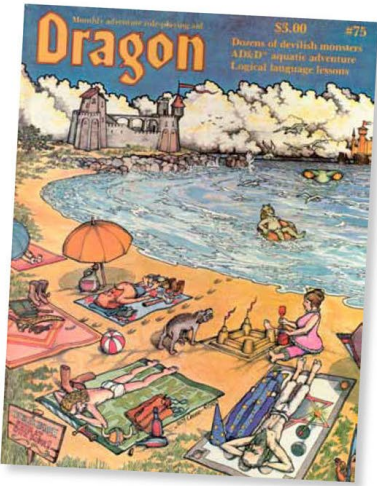
“The Nine Hells” instantly multiplied the scope of every existing D&D campaign, adding vast new territories for ambitious heroes in any world to someday explore—if they dared. For the first time, *Dungeon Masters* gained a vocabulary and a set of imagery to describe what awaited characters who ventured into the Outer Planes. Unlike the brief, focused forays contained in adventures such as *Queen of the Demonweb Pits*, the Nine Hells were presented as the ultimate sandbox. Here’s what’s here, these are the challenges, these are the sights, these are the threats, and these are the great powers who rule over these majestic and terrible domains. Because of Ed Greenwood’s “The Nine Hells,” thousands of characters have slogged across the burning sands of Avernus, skulked through

the iron streets of Dis, or battled for their lives in the frigid wastes of Stygia. The master villain of many an adventure waited for the heroes in some hellish retreat . . . or in fact turned out to be one of the arch-devils in person.

To this day, the layers of Avernus, Dis, Minauros, Phlegethos, Stygia, Malbolge, Maldomini, Cania, and Nessus remain the best known of all the outer planes. Ask any D&D player what the first layer of Acheron is like or what the names of the Seven Heavens are, and you’ll probably get a blank stare. But every true D&D fan knows that you’ll run into fireballs and spined devils on the plains of Avernus, that Geryon was once the lord of Stygia, and that gelugons—or ice devils—haunt Cania, the frigid eighth hell. These grim and terrifying domains belong to every D&D game. They comprise part of the common legends and lore players from all over the world can share and trade stories about. And it was Ed Greenwood’s brilliant, evocative vision that brought the Nine Hells to your gaming table.

Thanks, Ed!

**About the Author**  
Richard Baker is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and sourcebooks, including *Manual of the Planes*®, the *DARK SUN*® Campaign Setting, and the *D&D*® *GAMMA WORLD*™ Roleplaying Game. He’s a New York Times bestselling author of *Forgotten Realms* novels such as *Condemnation*, the *Last Mythral* trilogy, and the *Blades of the Moonsea* series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® at Wizards of the Coast.



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Among *Tome of Foes*’ creatures, some of the most dangerous include



demons and devils. Even more renowned than his “Magic in the Evening” series, Ed Greenwood crafted “The Nine Hells” for issues #75 and #76 (1983). We re-released these articles in *Dragon* #400’s anniversary issue (and do so now again!) as introduced by Rich Baker:

*A devil . . . thought the adventurer. Now there is a fitting foe! Moreover, his lands would not be safe until it was no more, and so he set about tracking it.*

*And a little later . . . There are more where that one came from, he thought to himself, standing over its smoldering remains.*

*“They could well come again,” he said aloud.*

*“Yes,” agreed the paladin who had fought at his side. “You have joined an endless battle, my lord. But if you weary of fighting it here, amid that which you hold dear, then come with me—I ride on the hells tomorrow.”*

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## Codename Baker



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Ages past, when the D&D website was still cooling, we ran the “Design & Development” column—including Dave Noonan and Jesse Decker’s limited series: You Craft the Creature. Players nominated and voted on various aspects of a community-generated creature, codenamed “Baker” (no relation to Rich Baker, mentioned above). Ultimately emerging as the Havoc Orb, its final stats appeared in *Dragon* #363 (2008).

Much like HasCon’s community-generated **Spider-Shark** (appearing in *Dragon*+ **16**), the Havoc Orb was certainly a bit goofy and oddly-powered—and a lot of fun to create (and certainly as chaotic as *Magic: The Gathering*’s **Chaos Orb**.) So why republish it now? For starters, its appearance bears some resemblance (in our minds, at least) to *Mordenkainen*’s marut.

And also, as a reminder to ourselves that we should run another such series. Soon.

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# Magic in the Evening

by Ed Greenwood

Artwork by Dan Burr

## The meeting of master mages: Elminster and Mordenkainen!

I was there when it all started.

My role wasn't glamorous: I spent an uncomfortable evening inside an old suit of armor, hanging from hooks on the wall as sweat ran down and dripped very slowly off the end of my nose. I didn't dare move an inch, and I nearly suffocated from the heat and thickening smoke in that little study, yet I stuck it out. I'd given Elminster my word to be silent, and I *did* want to live to see morning.

The Old Mage had been most insistent. The inside of the spell-shielded armor was the only place our powerful visitor wouldn't detect me in his first four breaths or so. We were in a cozy study in—well, I'm not allowed to tell you exactly where. Wizards are perhaps the most paranoid people alive—which, I suppose, is why some of them are still alive.

It began with our usual evening chat. After dining, Elminster blew smoke rings. I was watching, drowsing in the big armchair, when the Old Mage looked beyond me and asked calmly, "Are ye in the mood for some danger this night, friend scribe?"

I looked all around, but no one else had slipped into the room while I wasn't looking. He was talking to me. "Of course," I lied, then took a big gulp of cider.

Elminster waited, until it was just going down my gullet, and said, "Good. Ye have just time to set thy infernal recorders and get into the armor before his arrival. That way, ye *might* live to see the morn-but no promises, now." He watched me choke and sputter, and he grinned like the wizard he was.

Later, as I closed my eyes and sighed in the hollow darkness of the bolted-down helm, Elminster murmured, "No noise, if

ye would live." He strode across the room with agility surprising for his years, crooked a finger as he settled himself in my armchair—and a whole row of bottles rose from the cabinet across the room and followed him.

A wave of his hand extinguished the lights, leaving only the leaping glow of the fire. The Old Mage wiggled two fingers, and my best crystal glasses floated down over his shoulder. He studied the bottles, sighed, and made a "come hither" gesture. I heard the fridge door pop open and slam again—and wasn't surprised when a large, frosty bottle of cola drifted into view. He filled two glasses, and one obediently slid across the table toward the empty seat.

A moment later, it wasn't empty anymore. Without a sound or any warning flicker, burst of smoke, or dazzle of lights to herald his arrival, a middle-aged man with a wise, craggy face sat there, clad in high-collared but rather wrinkled gray robes. His face was alert and almost angry, like a hawk looking about for prey.

His beard was black, shot through with gray, close-trimmed and waxed—unlike Elminster's full, shaggy chin-mane. He nodded a greeting and reached for the glass in front of him. Little lights seemed to dance across the liquid for a moment, and he frowned faintly.

"What's this?" he asked in a deep, melodic voice.

"A carbonated, sugared drink popular in this place," Elminster replied. "Think of it as purified, sweetened water. Twill give ye gas in plenty, but no headache or worse. Well met, Morden."

Mordenkainen the Mage nodded and almost smiled. "Fair greeting, old man.

Khelben said you were oft found here."

"A place beyond the Realms of my cares," Elminster replied dryly, as the floating bottle silently refilled his glass. "As my days draw on, I increasingly feel a need to relax."

Mordenkainen snorted. "I've not noticed creeping old age slowing your works, as I walk the worlds, El. Here you are and there, always meddling."

Elminster shrugged. "I've been at it a day or two longer than thee."

Mordenkainen smiled. "One or two, perhaps." He held up his empty glass, and the bottle obediently started toward it. "Still battling the mighty evil ones?" he asked quietly, making a certain sign with two fingers.

Elminster waved a hand in reply. "This place is shielded against them. Ye may speak plainly. And, aye, the old struggle rolls along. I'd miss it, if one side or the other ever prevailed."

"Certes, were the winning side to be the other one," Mordenkainen returned dryly. "Good stuff, this." He belched suddenly, his brows drawing together in a dark frown. "Your warning was not lightly given." He looked around—and the flames of the fire were suddenly a shimmering violet.

Elminster nodded appreciatively, though to my eyes it made both mages look bone-white dead, and said, "I'll set thy curiosity at rest ere more time slides away beneath us, Lord Mage. Art grows ever wilder on both our worlds, and all the planes between. More than that; with each day that passes, we meet with more beings who wield Art, be they hedge-wizards, slithering tentacled things, or mighty mages hitherto hidden."

Mordenkainen nodded. "This is so," he agreed, gesturing for the Old Mage to continue. His glass seemed to have emptied itself again.

"Growing, too, are the numbers of those who have the power to walk the worlds, as we do, by Art, from plane to plane, and by sailing the stars. Things ever rush on faster—and ever they grow more linked, events that befall on Toril affecting ye in Oerth, what befalls on Krynn telling on both our worlds, and so on. Ye have seen it—there's no need to look well."

Mordenkainen nodded. "I follow your thoughts, El. This is the place where you tell that young lad all the secrets—and other things best left unsaid—of Faerun. I've seen the written results a time or two." He gestured meaningfully; a few modules and boxed sets on a high shelf shifted uneasily.

Elminster merely nodded. His pipe rose from the side table by the fireplace and drifted toward him.

Mordenkainen saw it and snapped his fingers; a slim, dark cigar was suddenly between them. As I watched, a spark leaped up from the fire and raced through the air to land upon its tip. He puffed and through the rising smoke said, "You think we'd both be better served, Old Mage, if we met from time to time and spoke of things on Oerth, Toril, and Krynn, and so laid bare small things and large befalling our worlds."

"Exactly," Elminster said, as the pipe settled gently in one corner of his mouth.

"A good idea," the Mage of Greyhawk went on. "I'm pleased that we can trust each other this far." He fell silent, and they stared levelly into each others' eyes for a long, cold moment.

Flames seemed to leap and whirl in Elminster's eyes, just for an instant. "Aye," he said. "Krynn . . . whom can we trust, to speak for that world? Mirthful old Fizban is gone, and we know now—too late—what he truly was."

"And young, damned Raistlin is gone, and we know him for what *he* was as well." Mordenkainen sighed deeply.

"There is another," said Elminster, "one who may yet prove to be as twisted and arrogant with Art as Raistlin, and perhaps as dangerous: young Dalamar. I know little more of him than that he has taken the place Raistlin held as head of the Order of Black Robes in the Conclave of Wizards. He has shown an exceptional interest in things beyond the reaches of Krynn—unusual for such an insular world."

Mordenkainen shrugged. "Over too many years, I have grown tired of turning back the clawing spells of young and arrogant boys and maids alike, filled to bursting with the little spells they've mastered, who think to prove their superiority over all the graybeards they can reach. Yet, no meeting in life is without risk. If this one can resist the temptation to try to impress us too much (and better yet, refrain from trying to wrest power from us), I am not

adverse to adding him to our gatherings of converse."

He frowned and added, "Mind you, three are always more trouble together than two. There's little to be gained if we merely set him a-scheming or rouse his ire enough to make of him an enemy whose interest or malice extends to meddling o'ermuch in the affairs of our worlds."

Elminster nodded, slowly. "I had given thought to such things, ere we met." His brow wrinkled, and I heard the fridge door pop open again. A second cola bottle then came into view. Elminster raised his own glass invitingly. "Here, then, to a dream: to the Wizards Three."

Mordenkainen snorted. "Hadn't we best save the toast until this Dalamar sits among us? Behaving himself, too."

Elminster smiled slowly. "His thirst for magic was enough that he abandoned his home and dark elven kin to serve under Raistlin. What greater lure could there be, to his coming—and his best behavior, at least at first—than two archmages with Art such as we command, who know the lore underlying what they wield?"

Mordenkainen matched the smile. "True. First, he'll want to impress us. Then . . ."

"Snatch all the Art he can, that which we let slip," Elminster finished the thought. "So we'll merely take some care with what we let slip, and steer him."

"A good thought, this idea of yours," Mordenkainen said, looking at the fire (which obediently returned to its normal hue, under his gaze), "especially if there's such a thing as popcorn around this place. Let's talk now of small and frivolous things as well as larger matters. I grow weary of pompous, saving-all-that-is pronouncements."

Elminster nodded. "So did I, back before Myth Drannor fell. They've started to grow a little more fun again, I must admit; 'tis all in how ye view them, I believe."

He stirred. "And aye, there's popcorn." Out in the kitchen, the squeaky cupboard door opened obediently. "We've a breath or three yet, before it's ready."

Mordenkainen nodded. "So speak. Prof-fer some tidbit of magic, some trifle of Realmslore. I'll trade you one in return, and perhaps we can go on from there."

Elminster nodded. "Where to begin? Ah—this'll interest ye. Last week, I chanced across Thundaerl of Tethyr. Ye remember him from Magefairs of old? The first archmage to earn coins in a king's court as a master chef?"

Mordenkainen nodded. "Ah, yes. We of the Circle paid him a visit once—cloaked with spells, of course—and he fed us most excellent pastries."

Elminster smiled. "He's made more money than most of us will ever see, these past dozen winters in Selgaunt, devising pastries, sauces, and delicacies for the finer palate and heavier purse. He proudly showed me his latest spell: his *universal taster*, he calls it. It's attuned to the one who casts it, revealing to his eyes—even in

the dark, and through sauces and even within meat—any substance that would be harmful in the quantities present for the caster to ingest."

"Taints, poisons?" Mordenkainen didn't seem overly impressed.

"Aye, but there's more. If ye be the server of the food, and such dangers are present, your food seems to change appearance, slim black serpents bursting up out of it to hiss and grin at ye. Illusory, of course—but an embarrassing tip-off that he knows thy game is up. Of course, the snakes give him clear excuse for destroying the tainted provender with a spell or two, without offending others at table."

Mordenkainen grinned. "That does sound amusing. If you can pry the incantation out of him. . ."

"Rest assured, I shall. No time promises, mind ye."

The Mage of Greyhawk looked thoughtful. "I've news of more import—to me, at least—but less specifics. Someone, it is certain, is trying to slay those of the Circle."

Elminster's brows knitted suddenly. "The Circle of Eight? Thy own Circle?"

Mordenkainen nodded soberly. "Tenser and Bigby have both been attacked—by magic, worked by someone strong enough to conceal his, her, or its identity; someone of Oerth, or who has studied our ways."

Elminster spread his hands. His pipe wagged expressively, from side to side. "That could be any astute mage who sailed in on the Flow or who walked the planes and laid low to look about."

"Dalamar again?" Mordenkainen's voice was quiet. Out in the kitchen, the fridge door was heard again. "Perhaps we wrong him," he added, more vigorously. "In affairs of magic, it is especially easy to find a single likely foe and blame everything on him."

Elminster nodded. "True indeed. Yet ye seem sure, at least, that ye face a mage or mages and not something else—say, an illithid, or one who uses the mind as we do Art, or one who walks in shadows."

The mage of Oerth calmly watched a fresh cola bottle fill his glass. "No—none of those would act as this foe has. Tenser, at least, is shrewd enough in the ways of adventurers to smell out any ruse. If one such was trying to make his attacks look like those of a mage of Oerth, he would see through it." He sipped cola and shrugged. "But enough of this matter. Our problems are our own."

"My thanks for thy warning," Elminster said, looking at his empty glass. The cola bottle obediently floated his way. "Perhaps I should tell thee of the doings of those who deem themselves important in Art, in Faerun."

"Such as the Zhentarim?" Mordenkainen smiled. "Such dolts—each tale of them is more amusing than the last." He looked at the cola left in his glass. "Do they still hunt spellfire?"

Elminster lowered his eyes. "That tale's end is yet unknown." He then looked



across the table; instead of their customary merry blue, his eyes seemed steel gray. "I would not speak of it, yet."

Mordenkainen merely inclined his head.

The Old Mage nodded in reply. "My thanks. I will say more, another time. No, I thought to tell ye of deeds in the desert, Anauroch, where the Zhentarim sought—nay, seek, I fear, as once a plan's in their stone heads, 'tis slow indeed to fade away—where they seek to slay or bribe their way through all the Bedine tribes and rule over all. One outcast 'witch' of the Bedine—Ruha, a sorceress of middling power, who wields wind and sand spells-raised tribes against them and hurled them back."

Mordenkainen regarded the last of his cola. "Word had reached me that thy Harpers had something to do with this Ruha's victory."

"Something," Elminster agreed. "Yet only one Harper was there, and he died in the doing. All he did was turn this Ruha to do what was already in her power, to resist the Zhentarim—she and the Bedine tribes who might otherwise have spurned her."

Mordenkainen raised his eyebrows. "What are these Bedine, that they can stand against Zhentarim magic? I'd heard them to be camel-riders, mere nomad savages—and that the Zhentarim sent lizard-warriors to swing more swords against them than the Bedine could raise."

Elminster smiled. "Thy information is good. In answer, consider ye the difference between these two statements: I have heard a Harper say, 'Life is a series of challenges—to be met and dealt with.' I have also heard a Bedine warrior of gray years say, 'Life is a series of battles, to be fought and won.'"

Mordenkainen smiled. "I see. The Zhents met a Bedine tribe and found a rampart of man-flesh that hurled their careless might of Art back and stood patiently waiting for more."

"Exactly." Elminster grinned at a memory. "I was in an tavern in Hill's Edge recently—The Banshee At Bay, 'tis called, and I especially recommend the baked stirge on toast. A Zhentarim mageling swaggered in, threatening everyone in the place and demanding the best food and wine in the same breath. The tavern master was an old Bedine with one leg, taken as a slave when young and too old now to fight the desert. He just listened, spat on the table when Lord High-and-Mighty was done, and went into the back room. When he came back, he was carrying a silver tray with a domed lid. He set it down in front of the Zhentarim. When the lad lifted the lid, everyone in the place saw the four old skulls on the tray. The old man told him that they were what was left of the last four Zhentarim wizards foolish enough to threaten him. Then one of the skulls grew an eyeball, and winked at the mageling. He ran."

The two archmages chuckled, together. "The Bedine's a wizard?"

Elminster shook his head. "Nay—his

daughter is, though; I saw her work the trick with a *wand of illusion*, behind a curtain."

"And the Zhent didn't come back that night, with a hand-count of hireswords, to work mischief?"

Elminster grinned. "He might well have done it. Aye, ye have the true measure of the Zhentarim. I probably persuaded him not to do so." He crooked a finger, and one of the other bottles on the table slid toward his empty glass. "I laid a little spell that kept a skull grinning at him, from just behind his shoulder, all that night. A floating skull, with two twinkling eyes, that never left him."

"An illusion?"

"Aye—a special one, that reflects back *dispel magic* spells at the caster."

Mordenkainen burst into open laughter.

"Another useful magic," he said when he was done. "I'll have to bring something comparable to trade, next time."

Elminster nodded. "See ye do; I've not collected a spell from Oerth for a long time, now."

Mordenkainen snapped his fingers.

"That reminds me—I've news of direct interest to you. Remember Ilphara?"

Elminster rolled his eyes. "I could hardly forget *her*. It's not every 'prentice who thinks herself powerful enough to charm *me* into mooning after a princess of Cormyr!"

Mordenkainen raised an eyebrow. "Did she succeed?" he asked his glass (which was nearly empty again).

Elminster grinned. "Oh, I pretended she had."

Mordenkainen laughed again. "Ah, it's rare to find such fun, these days, among the ambitious young magelings of Oerth. They're all so busy conquering the world." He shook his head. "But I was about to tell you what Ilphara's up to now." He beckoned, and a bottle slid his way. "Ilphara, the minx, has worked charms on at least seven merchants of the City of Greyhawk. Now they undercharge each other guilds and all be hanged, and work hand-in-hand to make her rich. She lies there in a silken-draped bed, growing fat and lazy, while they work themselves thin."

Elminster whistled. "Does she still have those jet-black eyes?"

Mordenkainen nodded. "As beautiful as ever, Old Mage. Fatter, though, as I said. But she's heading for a fall; some of the merchants got suspicious of these onetime rivals working such friendly trade, and they hired some spell-hurlers to find and knock down any *charms* or shady business. So sweet Ilphara hired some knife-in-the-backs to cut short a few wizardly careers."

Elminster looked at the ceiling. "And the Circle of Eight felt, ah, compelled to take action?"

Mordenkainen nodded. "Precisely. I've spent an enjoyable evening, before I came here, weaving *spelledreams* for the merchants. They'll be shown everything she's

done to them, as the spells slowly unravel her spells. When they're all broken at once, she won't know whom to face down first—particularly as she'll be too busy dealing with her own hired killers. I've made them think she's set them all up for the fatal sort of double-dealing. Moreover, though he doesn't know it, the best of them's wearing Samander's ring."

Mordenkainen drank, then answered the unspoken question. "The ring is a bauble I picked up a few years back. A waiting-spell will whisk it back to me before the wearer gets into too much trouble, and its own magicks prevent anyone from feeling it on his finger—or anyone else from detecting it, while it's there. All it does is counteract any order given to a *charmed* wearer, so if Ilphara tries to control him when he comes to slay her, her spell will work but he'll act as he pleases, probably contrary to any order she gives!"

Elminster grinned. "It sounds as if ye mean to give Ilphara exactly what she deserves. I did teach her that magical mischief always rebounds, if ye fall into lazy and cruel habits."

Mordenkainen stroked his beard. "You've unleashed many a mage on both our worlds, to follow or ignore your teachings. It's a credit to you that I hear of so few going wrong."

"Base flattery," Elminster reproved wryly. "I'm not so young as to need that sort of thing, ye know—or not to recognize it."

Mordenkainen chuckled, as another bottle floated his way. "Ah, I'm going to enjoy these gatherings. Have you such a thing about as the makings of a sandwich? In this world, once, I was introduced to something called 'mayo' that almost made up for the horribly transformed material they tried to pass off as meat in the same sandwich."

Elminster nodded. "I know just what ye mean" Out in the kitchen, there was a sudden tumult of opening and slamming drawers, crinkling wrappings, chopping knives, twirling jar lids, and the like. He looked apologetically in my direction, then went on, "My turn for news, I recall. Hmm . . . ah. Ye knew Tsunroon, did ye not?"

"Tsunroon the Traveler? The one who had a tower in the Drachensgrabs, and blasted it to dust when his apprentices tried to rob him, with them inside?"

"Aye. Ye know he went walking the worlds for a time, after that?"

Mordenkainen nodded. "He's back in the Flanaess now, around Niole Dra."

Elminster sucked on his pipe. "Aye. Not surprising he's scuttled for home. He ran afoul of the Alhoon in the Realms not long ago."

"The Alhoon?"

"Ye have never . . . Hmm. Well, look ye: They be at least nine, and all wear purple robes with red sashes. Methinks they came out of some far crystal sphere; at least, I never heard a whisper of them,

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until a few winters back in Faerun. Picture illithids—illithids who wield both Art and mind-powers, and who've mastered magic enough to attain lichdom."

Mordenkainen stared. "Mind-flayer liches?"

Elminster nodded. "We call them illithiliches; they call themselves the Alhoon. They're nigh impossible, gods know, to hunt down. They're worse to have as enemies, as ye might guess."

Mordenkainen nodded. "Should we be wary on Oerth?"

Elminster shrugged. "Now that ye know . . . tell the Circle, of course, and keep an eye open. They've not yet found Tsunroon's trail to Oerth, I'm sure—or none of this'd be news to ye, and it's the Traveler's gory death ye would be telling me of. Nay, they're too busy trying to slaughter all the local Zhentarim, so they can see their way clear to rule Faerun."

Mordenkainen snorted. "Do evil mages ever seek to do anything else? You'd think they'd have the imagination to find some other trail of interest to spend their lives exploring!"

Elminster spread his hands. "Recall, ye, that they and their kind give us something to do: saving the world from their various intended tyrannies!"

Mordenkainen smiled ruefully. "I suppose that's the best long view to take of it, El. Still. . . nevermind."

Elminster smiled back, then turned. "Ah, here come the sandwiches—I took the liberty of using something they call a 'microwave,' here. Ye haven't lived until ye have had hot cheese, and bacon—and even hot mayo—together!" He raised a hand as a floating tray glided gently to his elbow, bearing its steaming burden.

While they ate, Elminster continued, around mouthfuls. "I recently spent a night at the High House of Stars—a temple to Selune in Faerun, tucked away on a mountainside near Neverwinter. One of the priestesses is an old friend of mine, from when we were adventurers together—but that's another tale. She told me of Tsunroon dropping in on them recently. Teleported right into the midst of their moonrise service, scorched and smoking from fire-spell attacks, and collapsed on the spot.

"They nursed him, of course—after they'd raised a *moonweb* over him to foil any pursuit. Sure enough, one of the Alhoon had traced him somehow, and 'ported in after him a few breaths later. But one of the things a *moonweb* does is veil all sight of the place or person it's guarding. The other thing it does is hurl ye (and any spell ye hurl) right back where ye started from—with the magic ye used burned and gone."

Elminster regarded the crumbs on his empty tray thoughtfully. "Another thing a *moonweb* does is allow the caster a clear mind-picture of anyone—or anything—that tries to pass it. The Sisters of Selune all knew what he was running from. They

patched him up in a hurry and got him to a *gate* out in the wilderlands, where it wasn't likely anyone would be questing after him with seeking-spells. From there he obviously hurried to thy home ground."

Mordenkainen looked thoughtful. "These Alhoon sound like the sort of trouble that might just find a way to follow him. Once in Oerth, they'll swiftly be a problem needing my attention. My thanks, Old Mage."

Elminster grunted. "Twas not a problem."

Mordenkainen smiled again, visibly relaxed. "A good idea, this, El. I haven't enjoyed myself this much—nor felt so calmed for so long, gods take all—in years. It's a welcome change from always being alert and on stage, saving Oerth."

"Saving Oerth again," Elminster agreed, and they laughed together. Then, slowly, Mordenkainen's hand went out across the table.

Elminster regarded it for a moment, and then stretched out his own, to clasp it firmly. Things fell silent, except for the crackle of the fire, as two archmages nodded at each other.

"I'll be back—as often as we can both spare the time. There's a lot about Oerth I'd like to tell you," Mordenkainen said quietly.

Elminster's eyes twinkled. "So as to save having me wandering about in your back courtyard, rooting it out for myself?" He grinned and added softly, "We should have thought of this years ago."

## For your campaign

Readers familiar with events on Oerth will note that this meeting of archmages took place before the events of module WGA4 *Vecna Lives* or the GREYHAWK® Wars boxed set. Readers conversant with Toril are advised that the events involving the Bedine mentioned here are detailed in the Harpers novel *The Parched Sea*, by Troy Denning.

I have since wormed information enough out of Elminster to derive rules about the spells, magical item, and monster mentioned in his conversation with Mordenkainen.

## Wizard spells

### Curse of the grinning skull

(Illusion/Phantasm, Abjuration)

Level: 2

Components: V,S,M

Range: 20 yds.

CT: 1 round

Duration: 1 turn/lvl.

Save: Special

Area of Effect: One creature

This spell, also known as the *ever-watching skull*, creates the illusory image of a grinning human skull with twinkling eyes; it is visible to all. It floats at the shoulder of the victim, looking at him and seeming to react to his actions. It actually moves to always gaze into his eyes, responding to head and eye movements.

From time to time, it moves its jawbone in a soundless, laughing motion.

This image is nothing more than a nuisance. It can serve to scare off a known thief, mark a being so that he can easily be followed through crowds, or anger a wizard into wasting destructive spells on it.

A *grinning skull* reflects all *dispel magic* spells back upon the caster and is not affected by attacks or spells that deal physical damage. All *anti-magic shells* or related spells of fourth or higher level (such as a *minor globe of invulnerability*) will destroy it.

When the spell is cast, the target and the caster each roll 1d20 and add their level to the result. If the caster's total is higher, the skull appears—but if the victim's total is greater, the spell is lost, and a distorted skull appears only momentarily, flickers, and is gone. The spell's material components are a piece of human bone and a spark or flame.

### Thundaerl's universal taster

(Greater Divination, Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: 2

Components: V,S,M

Range: 30'

CT: 2

Duration: 1 rd. +1 rd./lvl.

Save: None

Area of Effect: Special

This spell allows the caster (only) to look at foods and see any substance harmful to the caster outlined in luminous purple flames (in the quantities present). The magic penetrates darkness, sauces, and solid objects such as lids and layers of meat.

If a harmful substance is present, the caster can will the food to emit illusory, hissing black serpents visible to all. This can alert the provider of the material to the wizards awareness of the threat—or give the caster an excuse for destroying the tainted material along with the dangerous snakes! The material components of this spell are a berry from any poisonous plant (e.g., deadly nightshade) and a piece of snake skin.

### Lesser spelldream

(Invocation, Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: 4

Components: V,S

Range: 0

CT: 1 turn

Duration: 1 turn/lvl.

Save: Special

Area of Effect: One touched creature

This spell is only effective against sleeping beings. It allows the caster to remove any spells of fourth level or less already in effect on the recipient (such as *charm person* or *change self*). The spell effects are unraveled slowly, without doing harm to the caster of the *spelldream* or the recipient, and without triggering any spell-traps or defensive effects. This occurs during an enforced slumber, which can be broken by any physical attack on the recipient (such an event will jolt the recipient).

ent into instant alertness). This enforced slumber is accompanied by dreams, and the caster of this spell can choose one image per level to feature in these dreams (typically, the caster shapes a sequence of images showing the recipient how they came to be enspelled, or why the caster has chosen to remove those spells).

While a *spelledream* is unfolding in the recipient's mind, his mind cannot be contacted or influenced by any other being. Thus, a wizard can pass information to a recipient who is under magical thought-surveillance without risk of the information being detected.

When the spell is cast, the recipient is allowed a save vs. spells with a -5 penalty. If the save succeeds, the spell is lost, and the intended recipient instantly awakens.

### **Greater spelledream** (Invocation, Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: 6

Components: V,S

Range: 1 yd./lvl.

CT: 1 turn

Duration: 1 turn/lvl.

Save: Special

Area of Effect: One touched creature

This spell allows the caster to remove any spells of sixth level or less already in effect on a single chosen spell recipient, who must be visible to the caster or specifically named during spell-casting. Except for the differences noted here, this spell is identical in all respects to a *lesser spelledream*.

### **Priest spell**

#### **Moonweb** (Abjuration, Alteration)

Sphere: Guardian

Level: 5

Components: V,S,M

Range: 0

CT: 5

Duration: 2 turns/lvl.

Save: None

Area of Effect: Special

This spell is used by priests of Selune, the Faerun goddess of the moon and stars. It creates a web of glowing, shimmering strands of silvery light. This *moonweb* cannot be seen through (except by priests of Selune, the goddess herself, and the beings in a protected area), but it doesn't foil magical means of detecting or locating beings and objects.

Any being, weapon, or spell striking a *moonweb* is forced, violently and immediately, back to its source. This includes beings trying to circumvent such a barrier by means of *dimension door* or *teleportation* magicks (which are drained and ruined by the *moonweb*). Weapon attacks directed at or through a *moonweb* rebound for full damage on their wielders.

Before rebounding, magical weapons do a *moonweb* 1 hp damage for each "plus" possessed. A *moonweb* can be destroyed by inflicting 1 hp magical damage per level of its caster, or by the application of a *dispel magic* spell.

*Moonwebs* repel *globes of invulnerability* and other magical barriers, but any contact between a *moonweb* and an *anti-magic shell* or any *prismatic* magic will instantly destroy both spell effects in a spectacular burst of harmless blue sparks and crawling purple lightnings.

If the caster of a *moonweb* is on the same plane of existence as the *moonweb* whenever any being or thing destroys or tries to pass it, the caster gains a clear, vivid mental image of the offending object or being.

This spell affects one touched creature or opening (e.g., a doorway or window) with a surface area of up to one square foot per level. The material components of this spell are a piece of gray or silver hair from any source and a drop of holy water.

### **Magical item**

#### **Samander's ring**

Named for the wizard who devised it some 40 winters ago, this rare type of plain brass ring protects a single living being whose bare flesh must be in contact with it. It need not be worn on a finger to work (it can be hidden on one's person).

*Samander's ring* is enspelled to elude all means of magical detection, even when it bears another spell (such as *Drawmij's instant summons* or other *teleportation* magicks, a *magic mouth*, or *invisibility*). It does not interfere with the workings of magicks cast upon it.

*Samander's ring* has only one function: It absolutely prohibits any mental control, compulsion, or influence from affecting the mind of its bearer, such as psionic attacks (note that these can still do damage) or orders given to a *charmed* ring-bearer. The bearer is made aware of the details of all such attempts and can therefore pretend to be affected. The ring does not prevent a *charm*, *domination*, or similar enchantment/charm spell from being cast on the ring-bearer, so that the caster may well believe such a spell has succeeded. It has no effect on illusions (including *shadow monsters*). When functioning, *Samander's ring* turns invisible and intangible; it can't be felt, struck, or torn off by purely physical probing.  
XP Value: 2,000  
GP Value: 12,000 (typical market price in the Realms)

### **Monster**

**Alhoon (Illithilich):** #APP 1-4; INT Genius (18); AL NE; AC 12; MV 9; HD 8 +4; THAC0 13; #AT 4; Dmg 2d4 or by weapon; SA mind blast, spell use; MR 50%; SZ M (6' tall); ML 17-18; XP 7,000; *Menzoberranzan* boxed set. Treasure: S,T,V × 3 (× 6 in lair),X.

Alhoon are very rare, magic-using outcasts from mind-flayer society who have defied elder-brains to achieve lichdom, becoming "illithiliches." Alhoon look like living mind flayers (mauve-skinned,

octopus-headed humanoids with four mouth-tentacles and three-fingered hands), but their skins are dry and often wrinkled, never glistening with slime.

Alhoon attack with four (AC 7) tentacles, each about 2' long. If successful, each automatically does 1d4 hp damage/round as it bores into the victim. A tentacle dealt 5 or more hp damage in a round will pull out of the victim's body; it will then strike (attack roll required) at a new spot. Tentacles striking areas other than a victim's head can't reach the brain; they do damage for four rounds, then withdraw.

As in life, an illithilich is the equivalent of a 7th-level psionist, commanding three disciplines, four sciences, and 12 devotions. It has a Power Score of 18 and 1d100 +250 psionic strength points. It attacks with a *mind thrust* and always possess *astral projection*, *body equilibrium* (its only psychometabolic power), *control body*, *domination*, *ESP*, *levitation*, *posthypnotic suggestion*, *probability travel*, and *teleport*. Other abilities are usually present and vary from one individual to another (see PHBR5 *The Complete Psionics Handbook*).

Illithiliches can also cast spells as 9th-level mages (spells: 4, 3, 3, 2, 1), using magicks seized from human mages or found in spell books from tombs. They avidly seek more spells, driven by a hunger for power. An Alhoon can use a spell (plus its tentacle attacks) during any round in which it does not use psionics.

Alhoon spells require material components, but these monsters often modify spells to remove the verbal component by altering the somatic component. Illithiliches can employ all magical items usable by wizards, as well as those open to all classes. Magical items, scrolls, and spell books are the treasures most valued by Alhoon. In the Underdark, they often use gems as currency. (Alhoon hate bright light but venture into the surface world by night or dwell there in caverns, gloomy woods, and ruins.)

Alhoon gain no undead attacks such as a normal lich's *chill touch*, but they do have "standard" undead immunities to *sleep* and *charm* magicks. They can't be turned or dispelled by priests and aren't harmed or impeded by holy water, cold iron, *protection from evil*, sunlight, or silver weapons. They are subject to the effects of magicks that specifically affect undead.

Alhoon have no need for sustenance, but their magic-resistant bodies adapt imperfectly to undead status; they are plagued by tissue desiccation. They counteract this by bathing or by drinking water, soup, alcohol, and other liquids. They need not ingest nutrients; absorbed poisons harm an alhoon but cannot "kill" it (it reaches a minimum of 6 hp from any poison damage, then takes no further damage). Their undead state neutralizes most poisons, healing all poison damage at a rate of 1 hp per round: Alhoon enjoy devouring brains just as they did in life, but need not do so to stay alive. ☞



## Dragon Anniversary:

# Return to the Nine Hells

By Rich Baker

Illustrations by Jack Crane, Anne Stokes, Warren Mahy, Daarken, Carl Frank, Thomas M. Baxa, Eric Deschamps, and Dave Allsop

In 1983, Ed Greenwood laid out the D&D game's first great vision for extraplanar adventure in a two-part article appearing in *Dragon* issues 75 and 76. Before "The Nine Hells" articles, all that we knew about Hell in the world of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS is that it had nine levels and was home to the race of devils (and a few stray lawful evil gods). But in *Dragon* 75, Ed Greenwood took us all on an unforgettable tour, filled with vistas of infernal grandeur and dozens of the most fully realized villains to be found anywhere in the multiverse. It all began with a wonderful full-page illustration of two heroes standing over the smoking corpse of a barbed devil, and perhaps the biggest, boldest, and most purely epic call to action ever written for a D&D game: *I ride on the Hells tomorrow.*

"The Nine Hells" instantly multiplied the scope of every existing D&D campaign, adding vast new territories for ambitious heroes in any world to someday explore—if they dared. For the first time, Dungeon Masters gained a vocabulary and a set of imagery to describe what awaited characters who ventured into the Outer Planes. Unlike the brief, focused forays contained in adventures such as *Queen of the Demonweb Pits*, the Nine Hells were presented as the ultimate sandbox. Here's what's here, these are the challenges, these are the sights, these are the threats, and these are the great powers who rule over these majestic and terrible domains. Because of Ed Greenwood's "The Nine Hells," thousands of characters have slogged across the burning sands of Avernus, skulked through

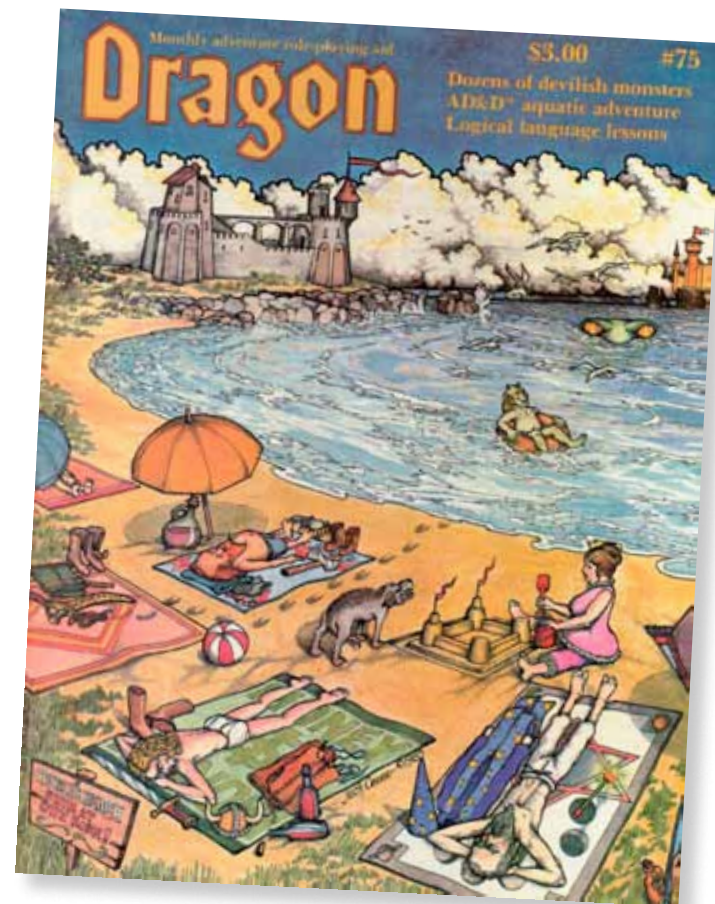
the iron streets of Dis, or battled for their lives in the frigid wastes of Stygia. The master villain of many an adventure waited for the heroes in some hellish retreat . . . or in fact turned out to be one of the arch-devils in person.

To this day, the layers of Avernus, Dis, Minauros, Phlegethos, Stygia, Malbolge, Maldomini, Cania, and Nessus remain the best known of all the outer planes. Ask any D&D player what the first layer of Acheron is like or what the names of the Seven Heavens are, and you'll probably get a blank stare. But every true D&D fan knows that you'll run into fireballs and spined devils on the plains of Avernus, that Geryon was once the lord of Stygia, and that gelugons—or ice devils—haunt Cania, the frigid eighth hell. These grim and terrifying domains belong to every D&D game. They comprise part of the common legends and lore players from all over the world can share and trade stories about. And it was Ed Greenwood's brilliant, evocative vision that brought the Nine Hells to your gaming table.

Thanks, Ed!

### About the Author

**Richard Baker** is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and sourcebooks, including *Manual of the Planes*™, the *DARK SUN*® Campaign Setting, and the *D&D*® *GAMMA WORLD*™ Roleplaying Game. He's a New York Times bestselling author of *Forgotten Realms* novels such as *Condemnation*, the *Last Mythral* trilogy, and the *Blades of the Moonsea* series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® at Wizards of the Coast.



## Dragon 75 and Dragon 76

# The Nine Hells Parts 1 & 2

By Ed Greenwood

A devil . . . thought the adventurer. Now there is a fitting foe! Moreover, his lands would not be safe until it was no more, and so he set about tracking it.

And a little later . . . There are more where that one came from, he thought to himself, standing over its smoldering remains.

"They could well come again," he said aloud.

"Yes," agreed the paladin who had fought at his side. "You have joined an endless battle, my lord. But if you weary of fighting it here, amid that which you hold dear, then come with me—I ride on the hells tomorrow."

Devils and demons have always been favorite monsters in AD&D™ play, particularly with upper- and mid-level characters. As a DM, I have been reluctant to include devils until I had done some work on the Nine Hells—for the simple reason that player characters, once they are introduced to devils and find out facts about them, are sure to want to carry the fight to the enemy's home ground. I am basically kind and fair (what DM isn't?), and it goes against the grain not to allow characters to enter the hells after they've gone to some trouble and expense to secure the means to do so. Not permitting them to make the trip, when they deserve to be given the try, condemns the characters to endlessly be on the defensive when fighting devils. Far more so than (for instance) the chaotic layers of the Abyss, the environment of the Nine Hells demands that the DM do considerable preparation before play moves to that environment. There are gaps and uncertainties in available official information about the Hells. Briefly, this article will

touch on some of these and explain the reasoning I have adopted; other DMs may well make different decisions. The treatment of the Nine Hells offered here leaves ample room for a DM to make the hells more as he or she sees them, and/or to include specific features therein for a particular adventure.

The very name of the styx devil (see the *Fiend Folio® Tome*, pp. 25–26) implies that the river Styx exists in some form in the Nine Hells of the AD&D multiverse, and we know (from the *Deities & Demigods™ Cyclopedia*) that the sahuagin deity, Sekolah, swims in the deepest part of the seas of the Nine Hells. Sekolah is a giant white shark that "hunts only the largest and fiercest of prey." The illustration in the DDG book suggests that a giant squid is part of such prey. Might Sekolah also hunt dragon turtles, or giant octopi? Or are there aquatic leviathans unique to the hells?

There are other details a DM must resolve, too: Gruumsh, Maglubiyet, Kurtulmak and some human deities (Set, for example) named in the DDG book are placed in the Nine Hells. Gruumsh and Maglubiyet are locked in unending battle with the armies they command, and these armies had best be geographically placed in relation to hell's nine planes. In issue 64 of *Dragon®* magazine, Mr. Gyax moves the first three deities (to Gehenna, Gehenna, and Acheron respectively), but it is unclear whether this change applies officially to the AD&D rules, or just to the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK™* campaign setting. Certainly, from a design standpoint, these deities are best removed, for if the archdevils themselves (see the

DDG book) are merely lesser gods, how do they exist amicably with Set, a greater god who conceivably has the power to (lawful evil, remember?) rule them.

If any deities are to be allowed in the hells, the suggestion from here is that they be confined to the first (uppermost) plane, which can serve as a universal "doormat" area for visitors and non-devils, and a staging area both for any standing armies or defenders of the hells, and for foraging parties who are to leave the hells on various missions.

Most player-character invasions of the hells, too, would arrive on the first plane. It is, however, necessary for the DM at invasion time to know something of the other planes of hell, since from those planes will come the reactions to any such invasions. Here we depart from the official, and move into this writer's attempts to make the Nine Hells a playable environment.

### Reality in the Realms

In the Realms (my campaign world), I have followed the idea of the shifts specified by Mr. Gyax in *Dragon* 64, removing all non-devil deities from the Nine Hells except for Sekolah. In the campaign pantheon there exists a greater god of lawful evil alignment (Bane, by name) who is worshipped by humans. The problem of how to deal with such a deity vis-à-vis the archdevils has been avoided by separating the two (the deity and the devils) entirely. Bane does not attempt to hinder or control Asmodeus or the other devils because they serve his purposes acting on their own, freeing Bane to do his work elsewhere. By

strictly avoiding the devils, Bane maintains an unwitting (?) but steadfast and quite powerful set of allies without fearing treachery from them, and without expending time and effort in the intrigues of training, organizing, or commanding infernal armies.

High-level clerics of Bane regard devils as a group of lawful evil beings who can be commanded into various services by the proper means, and who can be expected to act thus-and-so due to their lawful evil nature and the social organization of the hells, but who are self-interested and not willing servants of Bane or of the clerics. This is essentially no different from the way clerics of other deities regard the devils; the diabolical are never dealt with in safety and trust. To what extent Bane and the archdevils know of each other, or have contact, can remain vague—part of a DM’s “design elbow room”—for now. (Bane is geographically separated from the Nine Hells, too—he is in Acheron.)

## Using the rules

Various hints about the nature of the Nine Hells are found in the rules, such as the suggestion (by inference from the description of bone devils, and from the cold-related powers that Geryon and the bone devils possess) that Geryon’s plane is a rather icy place. By gathering the information contained in the AD&D rulebooks, and embellishing these facts with information from literature, one can cobble together a geographical picture of the Nine Hells.

A vast number of writers have offered their own religious or primarily fantastic conceptions of the infernal regions (those lands of the dead that are linked with evil spirits and, usually, punishment of the souls of the dead). The chief sources of geographically detailed descriptions of the hells are listed here, for DMs who want to develop their own versions: Dante’s *Inferno*; Homer’s *Odyssey*, book XI; Virgil’s *Aeneid*, book VI; Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, book II canto 7; Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*, book XVII; Tasso’s *Jerusalem Delivered*, book IV; Milton’s *Paradise Lost*;

Penelone’s *Telemaque*, book XVIII; and William Backford’s fantasy romance *Vuthek*. Libraries are the best sources for the above books.

Also valuable are modern fantasy versions of the hells drawn from the original sources, such as *Inferno* by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle (a 1976 Pocket Books paperback, still in print). There are many other such examples in fantasy literature, and many comparable underworlds (those in Ursula LeGuin’s *The Farthest Shore* and H.P. Lovecraft’s *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* leap to mind) also to be found therein that will yield ideas of flora, fauna, and physical conditions to a DM creating his or her own version of the Nine Hells. What follows is my own (unofficial) conception.

## Servants and vassals

Before plunging into a plane-by-plane description, a note regarding servant and vassal devils: These beings are useful in that they help to delay any direct intervention by archdevils in play, stretching out the fun and providing player characters with individual, significant foes of lesser power before bringing the “big guns” onstage. To characters (such as powerful clerics) in the Realms who are privy to such information, the role and descriptions of these servant devils is known to be as follows:

Some devils, even those of sufficient power to attain archdevil rank, see their safest position in the present infernal regime to be that of lieutenant to an archdevil. Their precise reasons for this attitude are known only to themselves, but it is thought that some prefer to maintain a low profile so that they can work “behind the scenes,” and others prefer to act in the name of an archdevil, thereby disclaiming responsibility for their own actions.

A DM should bear in mind that there is certainly some degree of silent cooperation between these servant devils, who wish to avoid being openly set against each other (i.e., in combat) or against any archdevil. This cooperation must be obvious to the

archdevils, who seem to tolerate it (Baalzebul the least), and some believe that Asmodeus quietly aids and encourages it, for it adds stability to the present status quo—in which he is on top. Fear and/or mindfulness of general strategy (ahead of short-term tactics) prevent most open rivalries between devils from escalating further than exchanges of nasty words and cruel pranks. A player character should not be able to play one devil against another like a Machiavelli might manipulate his courtiers; bear in mind that most devils are of reasonably high intelligence.

## 1. AVERNUS

The uppermost plane of the Nine Hells is ruled by Tiamat, the Chromatic Dragon, and serves as a home to all lesser unique devils. These are devils with individual names and characteristics, and powers of greater magnitude than those of a pit fiend (for all such unique devils of lesser power are soon destroyed by their enemies and the cruelty of their fellows), which are not otherwise placed in the hells as ruling archdevils or their direct servants.

There are approximately fifty of these lesser unique devils; embittered, frustrated beings who torment the lemures and spined devils of this plane and viciously attack all intruders. Chief among them is Nergal, who like all of his outcast fellows plots and schemes constantly to win a higher rank, but through hopes of reward always eagerly and enthusiastically obeys commands issued by the archdevils. Most such commands concern the defense of the hells against all intruders, for the dukes of hell have no wish to deal with intruders on their own ground—the plane or planes they rule—when such disorderly business can be conducted elsewhere. The uppermost plane of the hells thus serves as a marshalling area and training ground for infernal armies, and is (preferably to the devils) the place in which intruders are dealt with.

It is a plane of darkness, consisting of rocky crags and hillocks, a desolate wasteland of stunted,





poisonous vegetation and bare rock. Many concealed pits lined with filth-smeared stakes and the like have been prepared for intruders. Avernus has no roads or buildings, but many caves and warrens have been dug out of the rocks; most are devils' homes, as unwary travelers seeking shelter will soon learn.

At irregular intervals the darkness is lit by fireballs (as in the spell, varying in size and damage from 2d6 to 7d6) that form spontaneously from the vapors of the air, bursting at any height above the ground. If one should notice a glowing, swirling effect in the air, one soon discovers that a fireball will burst in that location one round later. The precise cause of these fiery discharges is unknown, but it is natural

and not under the control of any devil or other creature. A *gust of wind* spell will push a forming fireball away, but a *dispel magic* will not stop it from forming, or negate its effects. (Editor's note: DMs using *Avernus* in play should take note of the alterations in magic spell effects that are prevalent there and on the other planes of the Nine Hells. That information will be part of the second installment of this article.)

Any non-devil lawful evil creatures not native to the hells (such as the occasional beholder), if they are to be found in the infernal regions at all, will be found on Avernus unless specifically located elsewhere by order of an archdevil. One noteworthy example of such creatures are the nycadaemons (see

the *Fiend Folio Tome*). These have the power to move freely about the Nine Hells, but they are disliked and distrusted by the archdevils and may well be met with physical opposition if they appear uninvited on a plane other than Avernus. (DMs should bear in mind that a nycadaemon might aid a party of adventurers traveling in the hells, to further its own ends.)

Avernus is nominally ruled by Tiamat, the Chromatic Dragon. The mother of all evil dragonkind holds Avernus through the support of Asmodeus, but her actual authority extends only as far as her physical reach. Most of the inhabitants of the plane avoid her, not wishing to serve as her meals.

The Chromatic Dragon spends most (90%) of her time sprawled in her lair, the great caverns known as Azharul, "The Dragonspawn Pits." Here she is attended by her bodyguards, five huge adult male dragons—one white, one black, one green, one blue, and one red (for details, refer to the *Monster Manual*). She is constantly guarded by these consorts, and when not plotting, feeding, enjoying cruel sport or facing danger, Tiamat will be found mating with one of them within a protective ring formed by the other four. She bears litters of 1–4 dragonets (or "mewlings": very young dragons born conscious and in control of their feeble powers) after an average gestation period of 6 days. Tiamat occasionally (7% chance at any given time) travels via the Astral Plane or Ethereal Plane, perhaps to give birth to a litter on the Prime Material Plane (or Planes, if the multiverse of your campaign includes "parallel worlds")—sometimes grudgingly, at the behest of Asmodeus, but more often to further some plan of her own.

The scant remainder of her time is spent roaming Avernus; very rarely, she journeys to the palace of Asmodeus. Those of Tiamat's offspring that are born and remain on Avernus occupy themselves with hunting down and bringing back food for Tiamat and her consorts while the Chromatic Dragon is in her lair. These offspring/underlings are of all sizes, types,

and ages of evil dragonkind, and all are aggressive, cruel, and in good health. Injured, weak, or disobedient specimens are soon eaten by Tiamat, or by others at her direction; she also dines on slain dragons, including slain consorts who have displeased her, and all newborn spawn who are multiheaded or otherwise chromatic in nature. The few of her spawn that survive to achieve “huge adult” status serve as replacements for her consorts.

Note that Tiamat will have full amounts of treasure (as shown in the *Monster Manual* entry) only while in her lair. She may seize small amounts of treasure when on the Prime Material Plane, but only quantities which she can transport herself, since her bodyguards are unable to accompany her when she leaves Avernus. They guard her hoard in Azharul diligently in her absence, for she will notice if even a single bauble is gone!

The treasure prized most highly by Tiamat is magic—specifically, magic-user spells of 1st to 5th level which are new to her. With these she can increase her personal power, and consequently she is always seeking more powerful offensive and defensive spells which she can study, experiment with, and modify for her own use. Note that Tiamat needs time and trial to modify a written magic-user spell from the standard form to her own (verbal component only) form of casting.

While on the Prime Material Plane, she will reveal herself in the open only if she believes a fair chance exists to gain such spells in so doing. Otherwise, her visits to the Prime Material tend to be secretive affairs, for she feels uneasy without her bodyguards. In the past, it is said, many men (and some of other races) worshipped Tiamat, and her visits were triumphs of worship, adulation, pampering, and the bestowal or riches and magical information to the extent of human experimentation and mastery upon the Chromatic Dragon—but if this was indeed so, it is no longer the case. Nowadays, evil dragons will still acknowledge their allegiance to her, but this is a

“worship” born of fear and respect rather than love or loyalty.

Although Tiamat will battle (attempting to kill and eat) individual devils without hesitation, she will never knowingly attack an archdevil or a lieutenant to an archdevil. She rules her spawn by force and fear, but her will is enforced on Avernus by 40 companies of abishai under the command of *Malphas*, 29 similar companies led by *Amduscias*, and 3 companies of erinyes under the command of the pit fiend Goap. (Names printed in *italic* type indicate devils who are individually described in the text that follows.) These forces are always busy, for Avernus is constantly dealing with intruders and the machinations of the “rabble of devilkin”—former consorts fallen from favor, and other unique devils too weak or too mistrusted to gain or hold a position in the hierarchy of the hells. These beings are constantly attempting to gather enough support to win (at least) a position in the service of Tiamat, perhaps by supplanting one of the incumbent vassal devils, and are always moving to avoid the armies searching for them. Among these outcast devils are names such as *Rumjal*, *Caim*, *Bist*, *Cahor*, *Dagon*, *Azazel*, *Armaros*, *Kochbiel*, *Nisroch*, and *Nergal*.

Tales are told of a mysterious archdevil, *Astaroth*, said to be mightier in power than any devil save *Asmodeus* himself (see Alexander von Thorn’s article, “The Politics of Hell,” printed in *Dragon* 28 and reprinted in the *Best of Dragon Vol. II* anthology), who dwells elsewhere than the Nine Hells, apart from the present regime, working alone to advance his secret ends. This devil represents the greatest threat to *Asmodeus*; with *Astaroth*’s support, *Mephistopheles*, *Baalzebul*, or even a lesser archdevil such as *Geryon* could conceivably wrest control of the Nine Hells from the Great Devil himself. But even the existence of *Astaroth* is uncertain; he is definitely not an avowed force in the hells at this time.

### **AMDUSCIAS (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: *See below*

HIT DICE: 92 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 20%

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: *See below*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See below*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better weapon to hit*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: *See below*

PSIONIC ABILITY: 216

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

*Amduscias* is a duke in the service of Tiamat, ruler of Avernus, and leads 29 companies of abishai. He is a being of long memory and cunning strategies. He can *shape change* at will into a dirty yellow unicorn with eyes of flame and a purple horn, a hawk-headed man (he usually wears dark red or black robes when in this form), or his favored form: a wolf with a prehensile, constricting serpent’s tail. He does not need, and does not wear, armor in any of his forms.

When in unicorn form, *Amduscias* attacks with his horn (acts as a *sword of wounding*, for 2–9 damage), or his hooves (2 per round, for 2–10 damage each). His maximum movement rate in this form is 18”; he can “bolt” from a standing start, and some say that when horses spook or gallop uncontrollably, it is because *Amduscias* has affected them.

In humanlike form *Amduscias* has average Dexterity, and two or three attacks (fists for 1–2 each and beak for 1–8, or weapon and beak). *Amduscias* is ambidextrous and can wield two weapons if they are small (e.g., daggers or darts). This devil has above average Strength when in humanlike form, and a



long, curved beak somewhat like a hummingbird's in appearance. This beak is, however, terrifically strong and sharp. His move in this form is 12".

Amduscias prefers to fight in wolf form; his movement rate is 18", and he attacks with two raking foreclaws and his jaws, or his hind claws and tail. If in a position to do so, he can use all six of these attacks in a round, against as many targets. The claws do 3-12 damage each, the jaws 1-20, and the tail 1-10 constriction damage per round plus additional damage if Amduscias uses it to immerse a held victim in water, batter a victim against a rock, etc. The tail will loosen its grip if it is severed, or if it is dealt 17 points of damage in any single round or 26 points of damage over a succession of rounds.

Amduscias can change forms in one round (during which he can do nothing else except speak), and is restricted to the forms described. He can use the spell-like powers listed below, one at a time, once per round. Note that (as with other devils) verbal, somatic, and material components—as spell-casters on the Prime Material Plane know them—are not necessary. Amduscias' spell-like powers are: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *fire shield* (either version), *detect invisibility*, *detect lie*, *read magic*, *locate object*, *dispel magic*, *telekinesis* (5,000 g.p. maximum weight), *find familiar* (for another being; the familiar will be an imp), and *faerie fire*. Amduscias can cause *fear* (save vs. spell to avoid) in anyone within 3" he points at (but only one target per round). Once per day he can use a *symbol of stunning*.

Amduscias is sometimes called the "Reconciliator of Foes," because he is a skillful actor and negotiator, and Tiamat often employs him to mediate in disputes between devils or her kin. While in any of his forms, Amduscias can speak and understand perfectly any language (cf. *tongues* spell). When encountered, Amduscias will only have treasure with him if he is in his human-like form; if so, it may be of any type. Amduscias regenerates 2 hit points per round. He can *summon* (with a 70% chance of success) 1-3 abishai at will.

## **MALPHAS (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 12"/30" (in crow form)

HIT DICE: 90 hit points

% IN LAIR: 20%

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +5*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better weapon to hit*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: *See below*

PSIONIC ABILITY: 220

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Malphas is a duke in the service of Tiamat, ruler of Avernus. He leads 40 companies of abishai, and, like his fellow duke Amduscias and the pit fiend Goap, is likely to be found traveling about Avernus enforcing Tiamat's will. None of Tiamat's dukes have permanent encampments or fortresses, but instead they maintain a commonly held system of guarded, "safe" caves where their forces can rest or gather.

Malphas appears as a powerful, dark-complexioned man dressed in black velvet studded with gems (of considerable value; his robes have 333 gems of all sorts, 100 g.p. base value each, if recovered complete), or as a large, black, crow-like bird.

Malphas shuns armor, and fights with all weapons (and his spell-like powers) when in human form. His voice is deep and compelling, and with his powers of *tongues* and *ESP* (usable at will), he is adept at deceiving others, particularly non-devils. He may carry treasure of any type if encountered in human form.

Once per round, at will, Malphas can use one of his spell-like powers: *tongues* or *ESP* (as noted above), *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *fortress* (this creates a

structure similar to *Daern's Instant Fortress*—see the DMG—in all respects, save that its door will open and close for anyone, and it will disappear in 16 turns or when Malphas wills), *detect invisibility*, *read magic*, *dispel magic*, *flame arrow* (Malphas can also apply this to blades wielded by himself or others; these become *flame tongue* swords—fiery damage, but no "to hit" bonuses—for 3 rounds), and *remove* (or *bestow*) *curse*. Once per day Malphas can use a *symbol of pain*, and he can cause *fear* (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid) by touch (one target per round). He can *summon* 1-2 abishai, with a 55% chance of success, at will. Malphas regenerates 2 hit points per round.

## **NERGAL (Greater Devil)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 18"/10"

HIT DICE: 106 hit points

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better weapon to hit*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (9' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 211

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Nergal is the most powerful of the "rabble of devilkin" banished to Avernus by the archdevils. Usually enveloped in magical *darkness*, Nergal appears as a lion-headed, winged toad. His mottled pinkish-gray, warty skin is covered with sores which ooze a clear, colorless ichor. This liquid is deadly poisonous to humans and demi-humans, who must save vs. poison to avoid this effect if contacted. If the save is successful,



the ichor does 1-6 points of corrosive damage and confers immunity to its effects upon the victim for 10-40 turns. Nergal is sometimes called "The Bringer of Pestilence and Fever" because of this property.

Nergal is warlike, quick to attack those who defy him, and will bully injured or weaker creatures. His bite does 3-12 points of damage, and possibly confers a disease; refer to the DMG for type and effects. Victims who are bitten must save vs. poison at +3 to avoid disease.

Nergal can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *continual light*, *tongues*, *read magic*, *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, *dispel magic*, and *darkness* 15' radius. He can cause *fear* (save vs. spell to avoid) by touch, if he so wills. Nergal regenerates 2 hit points per round. (Note that he cannot use a *symbol*, nor can he *summon* other devils to his aid.)

Nergal likes to present himself to human intruders as a fellow man horribly transformed by diabolic magic, and may "help" the intruders for a time, usually to learn of their powers, magic, treasure, and purposes, before luring them into a trap. Often he uses the powers and magic he obtains in this way to torment his victims; sometimes he hoards information and treasure he obtains to use it for bargaining purposes. Always, he builds and looks to the future, planning a forcible entry into the ranks of the dukes or archdevils. He has no fixed abode or lair, but often conceals caches of treasure or magic he has seized in caverns and grottos scattered all about Avernus.

## **BIST (Greater Devil)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 14"

HIT DICE: 90 hit points

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5/2-5/2-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 60%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (9' long)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 213

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Bist, a devil akin to the hellcats (see the *Fiend Folio Tome*: Hellcat), is totally selfish and a master of duplicity. For these reasons, she is mistrusted by all archdevils and is confined to Avernus. Bist cannot leave the hells without being summoned (unlike hellcats), for she has been compelled to change her name, and thus can no longer be summoned by mages on other planes. She shares many of the hellcats' other capabilities, however.

Invisible in the presence of light (except for her eyes, which appear as irises of orange flame floating in midair), Bist appears in darkness as a faintly luminescent, wraith-like, and unusually large hellcat. Her eyes retain their flame-like appearance when she is so revealed.

Bist is immune to all mind-controlling spells (*charm*, *hold*, *sleep*, etc.). She can only be hit by weapons of +2 "to hit" or better, and all magical weapons lose their damage bonuses when striking her. Bist communicates by *telepathy* in a 14" range, although she can speak (in a hissing, rasping voice) the common tongue, Mabrahoring (the High Tongue of the hells), and the lawful evil alignment tongue.

Bist can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *affect normal fires*, *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, *dispel magic*, *magic missile* (3 missiles per spell), and *shield*.

Once per day Bist can employ *gaze reflection*, and once per day she can *blink*. In addition, she can generate *fear* at will in a 5' radius sphere about herself. Bist regenerates 1 hit point per round.

## **CAIM (Greater Devil)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 8"/16"

HIT DICE: 93 hit points

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better weapon to hit*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: S (5' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 213

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Caim is an outcast devil, bound to Avernus. He is a gossip and a sneak, and is particularly disliked in the hells. A skilled orator, he can always make his own actions or opinions seem reasonable—and he often seeks to dupe intruders, partly because he considers the flesh of elves and men delicious.

Caim appears as a large, upright, darkly handsome bird—a thrush—with a long, sharp beak and a belt about the hips. In pouches on this belt Caim carries items he deems necessary, manipulating them by means of his *unseen servant* spell-like power.

Caim can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *affect normal fires*, *unseen servant*, *light*, *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, and *tongues*.

Once per day Caim can *reverse gravity*; thrice per day he can cast *repulsion*. Caim can generate *fear* in a 5' radius sphere about himself, at will. He regenerates 1 hit point every 2 rounds.

## 2. DIS

The second plane of the Nine Hells is largely flat, with here and there a bare hill or tor rising smoothly up out of the plains. Its sky is a thick, smoky-hued green without clouds, occasionally lit up by high lightning flickers and faint thunder. The black and cold waters of stagnant rivers and streams are stretched threadlike across the plain, radiating outward from the moat surrounding the city of Dis, which is the seat of the archdevil Dispater.

The city of Dis, built of unrusting iron, stands on an island in the center of a lake where the rivers meet. The waters are poisoned and give off odiferous vapors, sometimes visible as smoky wisps or plumes. Over the plains sweep ceaseless, fierce winds, tumbling many lemures helplessly through the air to strike repeatedly against the ground or each other. There is at least a 10% chance each round that a land-based traveler trying to stand or move against the wind will be swept off his or her feet (20% chance if mounted or standing high on an exposed position).

Aerial travelers will find the wind unpredictable and savage, so that unless they have spent years learning to maneuver in constantly changing winds, they suffer a Flight Class penalty of -1, and an aerial movement penalty of -3". (Those of Flight Class E retain the ability to fly, but lose a total of 6' move distance per round. Movement penalties in all cases should end when a creature is reduced to a maximum 2" move.)

Erinyes, being native to the plane, can navigate with comparative ease in the gale (suffering no penalties), and some of these devil-types are always aloft, buffeting lemures for sport and watching for intruders. Erinyes earn increased power on the plane of Dis through the favor of Dispater, who rewards them for unswerving loyalty (he often arranges tests or traps for his servants) and for missions diligently and well accomplished. When an erinyes encounters intruders in Dis, it will usually fly near to observe clearly their



numbers and appearance, and then head straight for Dis to inform the pit fiend Baalzephon, Dispater himself, one of Dispater's other commanders, or one of the "Iron Guard" (Dispater's bodyguard of malebranche).

Almost certainly the erinyes will encounter others of its kind while on this journey, and these it usually informs in passing of the intruders and their location, so that said intruders will likely suffer attacks from odd bands of erinyes before any organized force is sent out from the Iron City. If a group of erinyes encounters intruders, all but one—the messenger to Dis—will immediately attack. They may not seek to

slay the intruders outright, for Dispater, like all archdevils, is always alert for beings or items that can help maintain or improve his own position, and no erinyes deliberately courts his wrath by destroying something Dispater might have liked to have.

The Iron City itself is a dismal place of eyrie-riddled towers, zombies, garbage-choked streets alive with rot grubs (and a black pudding here and there), and iron-barred cells full of chains and torture implements. Abishai, imps, and spined devils, plus occasional barbed devils, hellcats, and rakshasa throng the dark, reeking streets.

The island on which the city is built rises sharply in elevation toward the center, and on this rocky knob is the “infernally grand” palace of Dispater, many towered and terrible. It is fashioned of stone (unlike the rest of the city) and furnished with iron, carved bone, and stone. Its terraced approaches are adorned with trees fashioned of iron. The palace is off limits to those without a reason for being there. Erinyes can be seen frequently flitting in and out of the palace’s high, arched windows (presumably to give or receive information). There are many caverns beneath the palace, known as “the pits of Dis,” where prisoners live in unmanacled savagery, fighting for the edible garbage that falls into their lightless realm down shafts from the palace above.

Far from the central city, the plains of Dis rise into rolling hills, haunted by “wild” erinyes who seldom or never go into the city, and by many hellcats. Pillars of stone are said to move about in the rolling hills of Dis, but nothing definite is known of these.

Hellcats serve various of the lesser devils, and can be found on all of the planes of the Nine Hells (except the ninth, for Asmodeus does not employ them and seldom tolerates the servants of others in his domain) from time to time, in accordance with their masters’ wishes. Most of the devils regard hellcats as sneaking spies and useful errand-runners, but untrustworthy due to their mutable loyalty, and of little consequence. Hellcats charged with guarding or the performance of other protective tasks will serve with zealous diligence, hoping to gain favor with their masters.

Between the city and the hills lie the vast estates held in fief by Dispater’s vassals. The duke Bitru is the strongest of these vassals; he can muster 70 companies of erinyes. *Merodach* (described below), commanding 21 companies of barbed devils, and the pit fiend *Furcas*, with 12 companies of bearded devils, also boast sizable holdings. *Mephits*, *achaierai*, and *rakshasas* wander these holdings, and *stench kows* and *spined devils* are the working backbone of them. *Rakshasas* sometimes achieve positions of

responsibility in a duke’s household or retinue, but are always watched closely, for they are too selfwilled and ambitious to be trusted servants.

In the city of Dis itself—and almost always within Dispater’s palace—can be found *Lilis*, Dispater’s consort; his prime minister, the pit fiend *Baalzephon*, who orders and administers Dispater’s vassals and armies; and *Biffant*, the provost, who runs and commands the staff of the palace itself. *Titivilus*, Dispater’s nuncio, can be found here, as can the pit fiend *Bel*, who commands the “Iron Guard” (3 companies of *malebranche*), and *Arioch*, Dispater’s avenger, who punishes all those who have wronged or hindered the will and plans of Dispater.

### LILIS (Princess of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 14”/26”

HIT DICE: 66 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 85%

TREASURE TYPE: Q(x4), S

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +3*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 60%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (5’ tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 211

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

*Lilis*, consort of Dispater, is one of the older and weaker female devils, but her careful diplomacy and strategies and her attention to events in the hells and elsewhere (her network of spies is said to be second only to that of Asmodeus) has kept her own position in the infernal regions as secure as that of any of the nobility of the hells. *Lilis* and *Biffant* (q.v.), Dispater’s provost, are

as trusting and as close as two devils ever become—but both are (thus far) unswervingly loyal to Dispater, making his control of Dis the envy of other archdevils.

Once per round, at will, *Lilis* can employ one of the following spell-like powers: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *dispel magic*, *know alignment*, *detect lie*, *tongues*, *read magic*, *dimension door*, *repulsion*, *invisibility*, (fulfill another’s) *limited wish*. Once per day *Lilis* can *cause insanity* by touch. She can cause *fear* by pointing at a victim (one victim per round; saving throw vs. spell applicable). She can *summon* 1–3 erinyes (70% chance of success), and can regenerate 1 point of damage every turn.

*Description:* *Lilis* has orange-red skin, copper-colored hair and green eyes; she looks like a short, plump, well-preserved human female of middle age, except for the hue of her skin, her tiny orange-red horns, long red nails, forked tail, wings, and delicate cloven black hooves.

### ARIOCH (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -4

MOVE: 14”/20”

HIT DICE: 123 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 65%

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1–6 (bite), *by weapon type +6*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (9’ tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 226

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

*Arioch* serves Dispater in the office of “avenger,” meting out punishment upon all on Dis who defy or



otherwise displease his master. He also wards off the intrusions of devils of all ranks from other planes, and accompanies his master as bodyguard in all situations of possible peril (such as visits to the court of Asmodeus or other planes). In combat, Arioch employs a huge, 20-foot-long, double-ended +1 *halberd* (having a blade at either end, and wielded by grasping in the middle of the shaft) of adamantite.

Arioch can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time, once per round: *produce flame*, *blink*, *dispel magic*, *detect invisibility*, *remove (or bestow) curse*, and *magic missile* (6 missiles per spell). Once per day Arioch can use a *symbol of death*. He radiates *fear* at will in a 6" radius (saving throw vs. spell to avoid). Arioch regenerates 2 hit points per round.

*Description:* Arioch's flat, reptilian head (rather like a stubby crocodile's) is ringed with a leonine mane. His skin is dark wine-red, deepening to purple on the head and shoulders, and on his great bat-like wings. Arioch has a forked tail, great cloven hooves, and heavily muscled arms.

## **BIFFANT (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 14"

HIT DICE: 84 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: Q(x8), S

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +3*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 219

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Biffant serves Dispat as provost, running the affairs of that archdevil's palace. Consequently, he is almost always to be found in the Iron City, usually in the palace itself, where he is never without a staff/guard of two "messenger" erinyes and six servant spined devils. Typically he carries an ornate iron rod (equal in damage potential to a morning star), but will seize whatever is at hand in a battle. Biffant prefers to let others fight for him, however, and will try to *summon* or otherwise call for aid if attacked. He is not particularly brave or forceful, but is crafty and plans far, far into the future. Biffant and Lilis (q.v.) are said to be very friendly; closer in mutual understanding and cooperation, some say, than Lilis and Dispat himself.

Once per round Biffant can use any one of the following spell-like powers: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *read magic*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *detect lie*, *know alignment*, *locate object*, *animate dead*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day he can employ a *symbol of hopelessness*, or one of pain. Biffant radiates *fear* in a 3" radius at will. He is able to *summon* 1-6 spined devils (70% chance of success) or 1-2 erinyes (30% chance of success) when necessary. Biffant regenerates 1 hit point per round.

*Description:* Biffant appears as a portly, blood-red skinned humanoid devil, wingless but with a small, tufted tail and two inward-pointing, hook-curved horns that sprout from his head above either temple. His eyes are of a single hue, deep blue-green, and he is always smiling.

## **MERODACH (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 14"/12"

HIT DICE: 92 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 50%

TREASURE TYPE: G, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: *See below*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See below*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 196

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Merodach is a duke in the service of Dispat, and leads 21 companies of barbed devils into battle on his master's behalf. Merodach has the body of a wolf, large, feathered wings, and a prehensile, serpentine tail. Atop Merodach's head are two huge, spreading longhorns, and these he can turn slightly to strike an opponent. A clumsy flyer (Flight Class D), he prefers to run on all fours, but in battle often rears up to wield a weapon with his front claws. He has no special or magical weapons, but favors polearms of all sorts. In a fight his jaws do 1-10 damage, his claws 1-4 and 1-4 (or one attack with a weapon, damage as per weapon type +5), and his horns 2-12 each. Merodach's tail does no damage in combat, but is used to trip, blind, and disarm opponents, or to carry weapons for Merodach's use later.

At will Merodach can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *detect invisibility*, *know alignment*, *telekinesis* (5,000 g.p. weight limit), *read magic*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*.

Once per day, Merodach can employ a *symbol of pain*. He is able to cause *fear* by touch (save vs. spell to avoid). He can *summon* 1-2 barbed devils with a 50% chance of success. Merodach regenerates 2 hit points per round.

## **ALOCER (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 90 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 50%

TREASURE TYPE: G, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Bite 2-8, by weapon type +4*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (7' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 196

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Alocer is a duke in the service of Dispat, and leads 36 companies of erinyes into battle. Warlike in attitude, Alocer wears plate mail and fights with broadsword, axe, mace, and dagger, wielding one at a time and biting at the same time with his great jaws. He will seize and employ other weapons (incurring no non-proficiency penalties) available when in battle, and often rides a nightmare about his estates or to war.

Alocer has a humanoid body with red-gold flesh and a fearsome leonine head. The fiery flash of his eyes can be seen for some distance; if one meets their gaze, the victim must save vs. spells or be *blinded* for 2-12 days (devils are immune to this power). A *cure blindness* or *dispel magic* spell will restore sight to a victim.

Once per round, Alocer can employ one of the following spell-like powers: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, *fly* (enabling him to act as an erinyes in terms of flight class and move), *dispel magic*, *dancing lights*, and *read magic*. Alocer can cause *fear* by touch (save vs. spell at -3 to avoid). Once per

day he can use a *symbol of stunning* or one of *discord*.

Alocer can *summon* 1-2 erinyes with a 65% chance of success. He regenerates 2 hit points per round.

## 3. MINAUROS

The third plane of the Nine Hells is ruled by Mammon, the clutching "Lord of Avarice," and nothing of value exists for long on this plane before being destroyed or taken inside the walls of his many-pillared fortress. This nameless abode is built of black stone brought from another plane (possibly the Prime Material), and stands crazily upon great pillars that sink constantly, slowly, into the bottomless ooze of the marsh.

The outlands of Minauros form one great dismal marsh of stinking, rotting earth, covered with carrion and some inches of water. It is a place of eternal rain; dirty water mixed with hail falls ceaselessly, at a steady pace, from the murky, fog-shrouded air. The bodies of a great many creatures lie here; indeed, it is said elsewhere in the hells that Mammon's house is built upon them.

Disease (DMG, pp. 13-15) is rampant here; the base chance of a creature not native to the hells contracting a disease here is 13% per trip (including the modifiers for polluted water, etc.—but note that this base chance is doubled if a creature imbibes any of the water on the ground of Minauros, deliberately or inadvertently). Bones and the like are always handy for use as weapons—but their "handiness" also obstructs movement, causing constant stumbling and occasional falls for those who travel overland. A fall may do serious damage if the victim strikes an upthrust bone, or is knocked unconscious, perchance to drown.

The fortress of Mammon is the only building of any sort on Minauros; in the marshes, Mammon allows stone to be used only in "cells." These are great shallow pits (two or three feet deep in water) in which one or more great stones lie. Fastened to the stones at one end, and dangling away from them, are great

chains and manacles of iron or brass. The vigilant barbed devils will capture any intruders and bring them hence, where they sit or stand chained in the cold, fetid water until they die, are taken away for interrogation or torture, or escape. Sometimes when Mammon or his lieutenants are occupied elsewhere, the barbed devils will let a prisoner "escape" and then hunt it for cruel sport. What they cannot capture they kill, or else call on Focalor, the pit fiend Zimimar, or Mammon himself to deal with.

Typically, barbed devils perch atop the stone of a cell, burning the heads and exposed portions of the prisoners below. Prisoners soon learn (if they survive that long) to sit tight against the rock so that they can use it for protection and support, to elevate themselves out of the water by sitting on a pile of bones, and to keep their heads above water even when sleep comes. Barbed devils can control the intensity and size of their *produce flame* ability with great accuracy. The ground water of Minauros will douse such a flame, but the resultant scalding steam can also do considerable damage to the unprotected. (Barbed devils are not harmed by the steam.)

Toward the center of the plane, Minauros rises into a vast tortured volcanic badlands of ash-hills and slime-filled rifts. The palace of Mammon sits in a marshy bowl at the heart of these volcanic lands, where many rifts meet. It is here where Mammon's seneschal, *Focalor*, stands guard over Glasya (Mammon's consort), Mammon's palace, and Mammon's affairs when his master is out hunting across the badlands. The pit fiend Zimimar commands the "palace guard" of 6 companies of bone devils, and will either be found at the palace or hurrying elsewhere to protect Mammon or enforce his will.

The vassal dukes of Mammon rule stretches of volcanic ridges and ash-choked, lifeless woods far from the central palace, between the uplands and the marshes where prisoners lie in dolor. Chief among these vassal dukes is Bael, who can gather 66 companies of barbed devils (and actively plots to

supplant Focalor, and ultimately Mammon himself). The duke *Caarcrinolaas* commands 36 companies of barbed devils, and although he is aware of Bael's ambitions, neither supports nor betrays them. The duke *Melchon*, who can muster only 18 companies of erinyes, chooses to be eagerly and actively loyal to Mammon—which has earned him the deep suspicion of the seneschal Focalor.

### **FOCALOR (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE.: 12"/16"

HIT DICE: 121 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 80%

TREASURE TYPE: F, I, Q (x3)

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6, or by weapon type +4

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 223

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Focalor is seneschal (an agent, or bailiff) to Mammon, and wields much of the real power in Minauros, for his master is somewhat neglectful of security and diplomacy. The thin, often silent Focalor is careful in word and deed, and a master strategist. He is respectful, too, and takes no risks with the safety of Glasya (Mammon's consort) and that of the palace itself. Most of the other archdevils (and the outcast *Nergal*; see *Avernus* section) believe that Mammon would be easy prey were it not for the strength of his few dukes, and for the wise care of Focalor. Focalor's loyalty seems unshakeable; most of the archdevils have in the past tested it, and they continue to do so.



Focalor can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *invisibility*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *read magic*, *tongues*, *dispel magic*, *gust of wind*, *water breathing*, *teleport*, *know alignment*, *passwall*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*.

Twice per day Focalor can *blink*, once per day he can cause *blindness* by touch, and four times a day he can *remove* (or *bestow*) *curse*. He can use a *symbol of stunning* once per day, and he can *summon* 1-2 barbed devils (40% chance) or 1-4 erinyes (65% chance) at will. Focalor causes *fear* by his breath, a cone of foul-smelling vapor 1" in range, spreading from a mouth-sized base to a 3'-wide spray. He can direct this at any target(s) in the area of effect, one exhalation per round (save vs. spell at -1 to avoid). Focalor regenerates 1 hit point per round.

*Description:* Focalor appears human—a thin, bearded, and middle-aged statesman or sage with power and heavy concerns—until he unfurls his feathered wings from his flowing robes or reveals his brown cloven hooves. Focalor wears an iron gauntlet on his right hand, as his badge of office, and with this gauntlet he can strike for 1-6 damage. He is normally armed with a staff, but will seize any weapons in battle. His skin is a pale pink-green, and if his armpits and flanks are revealed, tiny scales will be seen.

When summoned to the Prime Material Plane, Focalor will seize any chance to swim (for this he enjoys), and revels in the use of two powers of his that are ineffective in the hells: *fish command* (as in the *trident of fish command*, DMG p. 155; all fish save at +1), and *call storms* (usable only when at sea), basically a combination of call lightning and control winds. The



call storms ability, when employed, evokes lightning discharges from any clouds present, bringing also rain and strong winds in the direction and intensity Focalor wills, the whole effect lasting 4 turns. If no clouds are present, this power attracts them (which may take several hours, or a day or more). When they arrive, Focalor (if still present) can use the call storms ability again, as described above, to bring the storm out of the “summoned” clouds.

## **CAARCRINOLAAS (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 14”/12”

HIT DICE: 104 hit points

% IN LAIR: 55%

TREASURE TYPE: G, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +6*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (7 ½’ tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 203

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Caarcrinolaas is a duke in the service of Mammon, and leads 36 companies of barbed devils into combat at his master’s behest. In battle he wields a +3 scythe that does 5-11 (2-8 +3) damage vs. targets of any size, and wears armor with a high-spined collar to protect his head (for he wears no helm). He is indifferent to the ambitions of others, preferring to follow orders and wait for any opportunity to better himself to come along. Let others risk their necks in intrigues; Caarcrinolaas will sit and watch patiently.

He can use the following spell-like powers at will, once per round and one at a time: *pyrotechnics, produce*

*flame, detect invisibility, detect magic, read magic, dispel magic, animate dead, teleport, invisibility, fire shield (either version), and (fulfill another’s limited) wish.*

Once per day Caarcrinolaas can cast a *death spell*, and twice per day he can petrify one creature by touch (as in *flesh to stone*; normal saving throw allowed). Once per day he can use a *symbol of pain*, and he causes *fear* by touch if he so wills. He can *summon* 1-3 barbed devils with a 65% chance of success. He regenerates 1 hit point per round.

*Description:* Caarcrinolaas is a gray/brown-furred, dog-headed humanoid with scarlet bat-like wings, upright scarlet horns protruding from a bony brow-ridge above each temple, black hooves, and a scarlet, forked tail. In the center of his brow is a third horn. Taller than the two up-curved flanking horns, it protrudes straight up, and can be employed (3-6 thrusting damage) against any targets directly above Caarcrinolaas (a rare circumstance). He has strong, bony, scarred hands of human appearance, and glittering yellow eyes.

## **MELCHON (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 13”

HIT DICE: 101 hit points

% IN LAIR: 55%

TREASURE TYPE: G, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE ATTACK: *By weapon type +5*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6’ tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 189

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Melchon is a duke in the service of Mammon, on whose behalf he leads 18 companies of erinyes in battle. A devil most jealous of his stronger fellows, Melchon is something of a malcontent in Minauros, and would welcome any setback to Bael or Focalor—but he masks his true feelings.

Melchon can employ any one of the following spell-like powers in a round, one at a time: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, envenom* (which turns water—of any sort except holy water—to a caustic, viscous venom used by erinyes and Melchon himself upon their weapons), *detect invisibility, detect magic, read magic, dispel magic, teleport, and suggestion.*

Twice per day Melchon can cast a *delayed blast fireball* of 6d6 damage, and once per day he can use a *symbol of hopelessness*. Melchon causes *fear* in all creatures within 1” of any living being he strikes, including the target struck; all must save vs. spell (the target at -2) to avoid). Melchon can *summon* 1-3 erinyes (70% chance) whenever desired. He regenerates 2 hit points of damage every round.

*Description:* Melchon is a fiery red-skinned, humanoid devil with upturned, bull-like horns; black, curling brows and beard; black hooves; and large, crimson wings. In battle he strikes with his weapons—usually a trident or a great two-handed war axe (12’ long, damage 3-12 vs. S/M, 3-18 vs. L).

His weaponry may vary, but Melchon’s weapons are never magical, and they are always envenomed (see *Monster Manual*, Erinyes, for effects of the venom). Melchon also makes use of his long, agile forked tail, which ends in a sharp sting. This sting does 2-8 points of stabbing damage, and Melchon usually envenoms it prior to any expected combat. Melchon is immune to the effects of his, and other devils’, caustic venom. Melchon’s venom does not dry out in the hells (although usage does wear it off of a weapon), but it is harmless outside the infernal regions unless it is continually within 1” of a devil (an erinyes, or Melchon himself).

## 4. PHLEGETHOS

The fourth plane of the Nine Hells is ruled by Belial. It is a tortured realm of volcanoes, gouting fires, hills of ash, and pits of smoking dung. The ground is always uncomfortably hot—most intruders are constantly on the move—and well patrolled by groups of barbed devils. Ground tremors are common, and a sudden, violent eruption or the opening of a fissure in the earth is not unusual. The sky is a dark, starless void, but the landscape is weirdly lit by leaping flames all about. There are rivers of liquid fire, and at least two large lakes (all the bodies of liquid are interconnected), and there the flames blaze brightest.

This “water” is home to several wandering salamanders that were brought here long ago, to be bound in servitude to Belial. This didn’t work out—salamanders take orders from no creature when it does not suit them—and most of the salamanders were immediately slain by Belial’s servants and vassals. But a few escaped, yet bound to this plane by Belial’s magic, and survive by avoiding large groups of devils and snatching lone creatures who venture too near to one of the rivers of fire.

These salamanders grow fewer as, one by one, they are found and slain—but the devils are busy, and the salamanders can leave the rivers without any harm and venture elsewhere on Phlegethos, so they have lots of places to hide. Their favorite hiding spots are long, worm-like volcanic “tubes” in rock, and they are fond of burrowing into a hill of ash until it collapses overhead to conceal the burrower.

This plane is perhaps the most visited of the Nine Hells except for Avernus, since outsiders who work magic often come to the fabled “firefalls” of Phlegethos, where the rivers of fire tumble from volcanic ridges down into clefts. The fire in such a spot is mentioned by many alchemists and mages skilled in the creation of magic items. The best *flame tongue* swords (DMG, p. 165) are made in such places; one account of the making of a *helm of brilliance* mentions



one such site, and the barbed devils themselves seem attracted to such falls of flame, leaping and playing about the firefalls and employing their *produce flame* powers as if excited.

Belial rules from the huge, hollowed-out shell of a dead volcano. His stronghold is known as Abriymoch, “The Mount of Leaping Flames.” The archdevil is attended by his consort *Naome*, his legate *Chamo*, and a few malebranche (notable among them the great scarred specimen known as “Night Fang”) under the command of the pit fiend *Zapan*.

Abriymoch consists of several tiers of chambers, opening into the central shaft like balconies, and

connected to each other by stairs, shafts, and a great spiral path that winds about the central gulf or shaft of the dead volcano. Some chambers stretch through the sloping walls of the volcano and have windows or doors opening out onto the volcano’s outside flanks. The lips of the volcanic crater are crowned by Abriymoch’s basalt towers. A few erinyes under the command of the pit fiend *Zaebo*s, Belial’s lieutenant, serve as messengers within Abriymoch and between it and vassal dukes or outlying patrols. These erinyes are often bullied and are quite miserable, and as usual have their eyes always on bettering their own positions in the hells. *Chamo* suspects that the

erinyes have served as the spies of Asmodeus, Baalzebul, and perhaps other archdevils in the past, but he has not yet been able to prove anything.

Abriymoch is staffed by spined and bearded devils, and has a kennel of hell hounds that can be used by Zapan's forces to help defend and guard the palace.

The vast, smoking plains surrounding the volcanic heart of Phlegethos are the domain of Belial's vassals: *Balan*, who commands 40 companies of bearded devils; *Bathym*, who can muster 30 companies of barbed devils; and *Gaziel*, who leads 11 companies of bone devils. These vassals are usually dealt with and commanded by Zaebo, speaking for his master Belial, who, assisted by Chamo, is usually occupied with matters of diplomacy and intrigue within the Nine Hells.

Phlegethos is the most chaotic physical environment in the Nine Hells, affording intruders the most opportunities for concealment—but it is also one of the most active planes, being constantly traveled by its inhabitants. The archdevils of other planes often test underlings by sending them here, charged with accomplishing a task and remaining undetected by the patrols that roam Phlegethos, while their progress is observed by spies—of whom there are many among the barbed devils.

As with Minauros, the outlands of Phlegethos are wetter and lower than the interior, and these “reek-ing fens” are populated by bearded devils, a few styx devils and abishai, hell hounds, lemures, and the mephits who flit about constantly everywhere on Phlegethos, serving as “eyes” for any and all who reward them.

### NAOME (Princess of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 16"/26"

HIT DICE: 69 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 85%

TREASURE TYPE: P, S, T

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +5*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 219

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Naome is consort to Belial, the ruler of Phlegethos. She spends much of her time in Abriymoch, but is highly regarded in the hells for her settling of disputes when others have failed, and her shrewd bargaining ability. In battle she uses her spells and a long scimitar; although she rarely engages in combat, it is said she enjoys a good fight.

Naome can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round, at will: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *charm person*, *dispel magic*, *know alignment*, *detect invisible*, *read magic*, *telekinesis*, (2,000 g.p. weight limit), *suggestion*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day Naome can cast a *feeble-mind* (normal saving throw applies) on one creature. Her gaze can, if she so wills, cause *fear* (save vs. spell to avoid). She can *summon* 1–4 barbed devils (65% chance of success), and regenerates 2 points of damage every turn.

*Description:* Naome is a short, burly, middle-aged female devil, with long brown hair and cold, pale blue-green eyes. She has a tinkling laugh and a surprisingly light, easy sense of humor. Quick-witted and glib-tongued, she rarely makes enemies (although she bears no love for Glasya, the consort of Mammon, or Lilith, the consort of Moloch), and is most friendly with Baftis, the consort of Baalzebul. When clad in flowing robes (she prefers green or claret-colored silken garments), only her tiny horns, gray hooves, and crimson forked tail betray her diabolic nature. Her face, shoulders, and hands have a pale,

human-like complexion, but the rest of her body is deep crimson in color. Her hands have long red nails.

### CHAMO (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 14"/16"

HIT DICE: 131 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 85%

TREASURE TYPE: C, P, S

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE ATTACK: *By weapon type +4*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 222

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Chamo serves Belial as legate, and plans one day to supplant his master. He fears Naome more than Belial, for Chamo and she too often think alike to suit him. Polite but abrupt, Chamo always appears calm and fearless. He is said to know every hiding place in Phlegethos, and possesses an iron-shod staff capped with the linked (by rings of beaten brass) skulls of sixteen paladins defeated by him over the years. This staff is +1, parts or negates all *web* spells, *wizard lock* spells, *hold* spells, and other locks or bindings at a touch, and it can *detect good*; the skulls upon its top glow with a pearly white radiance when a creature of good alignment is within 9".

Chamo can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *wall of smoke* (equals *wall of fog*), *fireball* (4d6), *charm person*, *dispel magic*, *read magic*, *tongues*, *detect invisibility*, *invisibility*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*.



Twice per day Chamo can *reverse gravity* (for as long as desired, or until his concentration is broken by events or attack), and once per day he can *petrify* (*flesh to stone* of permanent duration) one creature, by touch. He causes *fear* by his stare (save vs. spell to avoid), and can employ a *symbol of stunning* once per day. Chamo can *summon* 1-6 bearded devils (45% chance of success) at will.

**Description:** Chamo appears as a white-haired, middle-aged man with big brown eyes. He has upward-pointing horns, black hooves, a forked tail, and black bat-like wings. His skin is scarlet, darkening to blue on his long-nailed hands. He usually wears loose robes of black with a high stand-up collar.

## **BALAN (Duke of Hell)**

**FREQUENCY:** *Unique (very rare)*

**NO. APPEARING:** 1

**ARMOR CLASS:** -3

**MOVE:** 12"

**HIT DICE:** 112 *hit points*

**% IN LAIR:** 55%

**TREASURE TYPE:** C, P

**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 2

**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** *By weapon type +6*

**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** *See below*

**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** *See below*

**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** 70%

**INTELLIGENCE:** *Exceptional*

**ALIGNMENT:** *Lawful evil*

**SIZE:** M (9' tall)

**PSIONIC ABILITY:** 219

**Attack/Defense Modes:** *All/all*

Balan is a duke in the service of Belial, and leads 40 companies of bearded devils into combat. Like his soldiers, he is cruel and aggressive, given to wild, lustful rages and violent sport. Little liked even among his fellows on Phlegethos, Balan is at the most respected, and at the least tolerated. He will never back down

from a fight, although he is shrewd enough not to be drawn into conflict with superior foes, given any choice in the matter. In battle he fights with his spined limbs and a weapon, favoring large axes, blades, or halberds (but he has no special or magical arms). Balan is belligerent, roaring, and loves a rough-and-tumble fight with opponents he considers weaker than himself.

Along his forearms from his elbows to the backs of his hands run rows of spines six to eight inches in length. These spines pierce and rake for 2-4 points of damage per arm per attack, and a struck opponent must save vs. poison or immediately develop a burning rash which reduces Dexterity by 1 point per round for six rounds after the attack. Subsequent poison attacks on the same target will not hasten the loss of Dexterity points, and a 6-point loss is the most that can be suffered. Recovery of lost Dexterity points begins, at the rate of 2 points per round, on the round after the victim reaches the maximum penalty of -6. Any poison strikes suffered by a victim during the recovery period will drive the victim back toward the maximum Dexterity loss of 6 points, counteracting points gained back up to that time and delaying further recovery.

Once per round, Balan can use one of the following spell-like powers: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *detect invisibility*, *dispel magic*, *invisibility*, *teleport*, *wall of fire*, *push*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Balan causes *fear* with his roar (save vs. spell at -1 to avoid) in all creatures within 2". Once per day he can use a *symbol of pain*. He can also *summon* 1-4 bearded devils with a 50% chance of success. Balan regenerates 2 hit points per round.

**Description:** Balan appears as a giant, yellow-skinned man with fierce black brows and a beard which grows in tufts (somewhat resembling the lower barbels of a catfish). He has gray hooves and a body which darkens to scarlet about his legs and his forked tail. He typically wears a leather weapon belt and

girdle, but shuns armor. He has red, flaming eyes visible at some distance, and a hoarse voice. He is quite a wit (despite a coarse sense of humor), although few converse long enough on friendly terms with him to discover this. He wears a badge upon his belt depicting his own head next to a bull's head (signifying his brutal, aggressive nature) and a ram's head (denoting the lusty side of his nature). Balan is polite and respectful to Naome, his master's consort, but other she-devils will rarely tolerate his presence.

## **BATHYM (Duke of Hell)**

**FREQUENCY:** *Unique (very rare)*

**NO. APPEARING:** 1

**ARMOR CLASS:** -2

**MOVE:** 14"

**HIT DICE:** 102 *hit points*

**% IN LAIR:** 55%

**TREASURE TYPE:** C, P

**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 1

**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 2-8 *or by weapon type +5*

**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** *See below*

**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** *See below*

**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** 70%

**INTELLIGENCE:** *Exceptional*

**ALIGNMENT:** *Lawful evil*

**SIZE:** M (6' tall)

**PSIONIC ABILITY:** 221

**Attack/Defense modes:** *All/all*

Bathym is a duke in the service of Belial, and leads 30 companies of barbed devils. He is sometimes called "The Black Duke," after his custom of wearing jet black armor (with full helm) and a black cloak. In battle Bathym wields a black +3 mace which dispels *light*, *continual light*, and *faerie fire* radiances upon contact with the affected area, and causes *dancing lights* to fade away. Bathym is also armed with a long-bladed, envenomed knife (treat as a dagger of venom), and his spell-like abilities. He rides a nightmare into

battle. If summoned or bargained with, he will reveal (for a high price) knowledge of the magical lore of gemstones, herbal lore, and low-level magic-user spells (material components, casting, and general principles).

Once per round, Bathym can, at will, use one of the following spell-like powers: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *read magic*, *tongues*, *detect invisibility*, *wall of fire*, *blink*, *teleport*, *ESP*, *confusion*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day he can cast *feeblemind*, and thrice per day he can use a 4-dice *delayed blast fireball*. Once per day Bathym can use a *symbol of sleep* (19 levels or hit dice or 99 hit points affected; saving throw indicates only nodding and dozing with a 1 in 20 chance per round of awakening fully, and automatic arousal if attacked). He causes *fear* by pointing at a target (one creature only per round, effective only within 5" range; save vs. spell to avoid). At will Bathym can summon 1-3 barbed devils (60% chance of success). Bathym regenerates 1 hit point every 2 rounds.

*Description:* Bathym dresses in black, and has black-hued eyes, black hooves, and black nails. His skin, horns and tail are a dead, fishbelly-white color. Bathym's forked tail is short and curled like a pig's; he is most sensitive about it and keeps it concealed. When angry, Bathym hisses like a snake when he speaks.

#### **GAZIEL (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 16"

HIT DICE: 116 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 55%

TREASURE TYPE: P, S

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12, *or by weapon type +5*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 196

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Gaziel is a duke in the service of Belial, and leads 11 companies of bone devils into battle when called upon by his master. He does nothing he does not have to do, and appears to spend much of his time brooding. In battle, Gaziel is cold and mechanical—a perfect general, never missing or forgetting any aspect of a skirmish or possible tactic. On rare occasions he appears to take some personal interest in such a fight, whereupon he becomes most savage. He fights by spitting acid up to 2" with his forked tongue (3-12 corrosive damage, will eat through metal, hide or cloth), and with whatever weapons are at hand.

Once per round Gaziel can use any one of the following spell-like powers: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *hold person*, *hold monster*, *read magic*, *know alignment*, *detect invisibility*, *burning hands* (doing 14 hit points of damage), *fly*, *teleport*, *dispel magic*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day he can *slay living* (one creature, by touch), and twice per day he can *paralyze* a victim within 4" by pointing at the character or creature (save vs. paralyzation to avoid). Once per day he can use a *symbol of hopelessness*. Gaziel radiates *fear* in a 2" radius at will. He can *summon* 1-3 bone devils with a 60% chance of success. Gaziel regenerates 1 hit point every 2 rounds.

*Description:* Gaziel has a white, skull-like head with hollow eye sockets and small, curling pink horns, so that from a distance he resembles a bone devil. He has a brown to blood-red hued humanoid body, a red forked tail, and black hooves. His tongue is long, slim, purple-red, and forked. His wrists and knees have bulbous, bony joints, and his elbows have hooked spurs (1-6 gash damage).

## 5. STYGIA

The fifth plane of the Nine Hells derives its name from the Styx, the mighty river of black, opaque water that falls from the endless encircling mountains and swells into a vast salt swamp that fills much of the plane. Stygia is ruled by Geryon from his huge castle, Tantlin, which lies at the center of the plane, the swamp curving about it for slightly less than half the run of its high stone walls. Stygia is a chilly place, lit by lightning flashes and "cold fires" (weird white flames that are freezing cold and do 2-12 points of damage per round of contact) that burn on rocky peaks for some time after a lightning strike. It is not known precisely what these flames feed on—they appear to blaze on bare rock—and they leave no trace on rock or ice. Much of Stygia's landscape is high, tumbled rock and ice. Avalanches and electrical storms are common, and "shooting stars" of ice sometimes hurtle across the sky from the peaks, smoking, to plunge into the swamp far below.

The swamp itself is constantly disturbed by splashes and wails, for it is the abode of the styx devils, who torment lemures constantly unless summoned by Geryon to undertake a mission. Sometimes a bone devil or horned devil will enter the swamp to join in the fun, or to chase a few styx devils, but on such occasions all of the styx devils present will eventually unite to drive them out.

Beneath the swamp lies a cold and lightless ocean, home to giant octopi and squids, whales, and many smaller, blind fish. There are no sharks or killer whales, however, for in the utter depths Sekolah, a great white shark, cruises. She long ago devoured all potential rivals, and now swims supreme, ignored by the devils, as the ruler of her deep realm. If there ever was an aquatic race of any sort at the bottom of this black river—sahuagin, diabolic, or otherwise—there is none now. The sahuagin of the Prime Material Plane worship Sekolah (see the DDG book) but she appears totally disinterested in all matters except where her



next meal is coming from. Much of the upper reaches of the ocean are always frozen (if they were not, much of the vegetation that makes up the swamp would have sunk to the ocean floor long ago), and Sekolah very rarely comes to the surface. When she does, lemures, hell hounds, and devils alike usually make a hasty exit from the surrounding area.

Geryon seldom leaves his great castle. He delights in physically battling lesser devils and captured intruders within the walls of Tantlin, sometimes chasing them for long periods of time throughout the halls of the castle and the gravel-strewn mines nearby, where Tantlin's blocks were and still are quarried, eternally, by captives, spined and barbed devils, and

the like. Geryon delights in luring powerful creatures from other planes (that is, from outside the hells) to Stygia with carefully contrived tales of magic, lore, or other treasure, so that they can be the victims for one of his cruel hunts. Any survivors of these unsporting events go to the quarries. (Geryon, by the way, is immune to the strength-sapping power of the bone devils' tail poison.)

One of the most powerful members of Geryon's retinue is *Herodias*, whose title is magistrate. Herodias is responsible for the security of the realm and the training and ordering of Geryon's legions of bone devils, and for assuming command of the defenses of Tantlin whenever Geryon is hunting.

Geryon's bailiff, *Gorson*, concentrates on external matters. It is Gorson who observes the day-to-day activities and internal politics of the other planes of the Nine Hells, and who (unless Geryon steps in to do this directly) orders and coordinates the styx devils in their individual missions about the planes.

Geryon is perhaps the most satisfied or contented of the archdevils, and the least interested in the endless political struggle among the devils for more power, although he never misses a chance to act to the detriment of his foe Moloch, ruler of the sixth plane, or his other neighbor, Belial. Herodias and Gorson safeguard his interests (under the watchful eye of *Cozbi*, Geryon's consort), gaining much actual power while always acting in Geryon's name, and allowing Geryon to continue his "hunts" by, if not increasing his force and influence, at least preventing their erosion.

Newcomers to Stygia will find that it is cold (why the swamp and the river Styx do not freeze is a mystery to one accustomed to conditions on the Prime Material Plane), with little shelter outside Tantlin, and there is nothing to eat unless one has a taste for the flesh of devils, lemures or hell hounds. (It is not certain if such flesh is edible by humans. Some mad adventurers in the Realms have boasted of eating the flesh of devils, but the truth of their claims is unknown. If their words are true, it is impossible to say if such food is poisonous to some, carries any diseases or parasites, or if it in fact has caused their mental conditions.) Tantlin, however, is said to be richly provisioned and furnished, crammed with the bric-a-brac of centuries of plundering the wealth of other planes. (Before he gained the rulership of his own plane, Geryon was wont to undertake extended pillaging expeditions through the Prime Material Plane whenever summoned there by a foolish mortal—and he always sought out the most dangerous, and richest, foes.)

Geryon's vassals are outwardly loyal, and are often called upon to protect their master's interests. They include Amon, who commands 40 companies of bone



devils; *Agares*, who commands 31 companies of bone devils; *Machalas*, who leads 11 companies of barbed devils; and the pit fiend *Fecor*, who leads 8 companies of malebranche.

The fiefs of these dukes lie between Tantlin itself and the rockiest heights of the endless, frozen mountains, consisting of rising land and many long, twisting rocky canyons and hanging valleys. There are a few remote volcanic rifts in the mountains, commonly known as “steam trenches,” where the malebranche dwell unless ordered elsewhere.

## COZBI (Princess of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 14"/24"

HIT DICE: 67 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: C, E

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +4*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (7' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 229

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Cozbi is consort to Geryon, ruler of the fifth plane of the Nine Hells, and is perhaps the quietest and least forceful of the diabolic princesses—but she is no easy mark. Cozbi watches her master's interests carefully at all times, for she knows well the hatred that both Moloch and Belial hold for Geryon, and she is aware of Geryon's relative weakness among the archdevils. She mistrusts both Herodias and Gorson, and is said by some to be friendly with the outcast devil *Nergal* (see *Avernus* section). In battle, Cozbi throws

poisoned knives (Insinuating Type D; DMG, p. 20), and fights with a +1 spear.

Cozbi can employ the following spell-like powers, using them one at a time and one per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *detect invisibility*, *charm monster*, *charm person*, *suggestion*, *dispel magic*, *know alignment*, *invisibility*, *polymorph self*, *read magic*, *ice storm*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) wish. Four times per day she can cast a 4-dice lightning bolt, and once per day she can employ a *finger of death*. She causes *fear* by speaking to an individual (save vs. spell to avoid). She can *summon* (40% chance) 1-2 styx devils or, if she chooses, 1-4 bone devils (70% chance of success). Cozbi regenerates 2 points of damage every turn.

*Description:* Cozbi appears as a beautiful, unnaturally tall woman with chalk-white skin and long (thigh-length) pale green hair. Her eyes are fiery green and her long nails are black. She wears belted robes and jewelry when in Tantlin, but when fighting or otherwise active strips her garments away, whereupon her diabolic nature is revealed. Her hooves are tiny and delicate, easily concealed by boots, and Cozbi customarily wraps her forked tail about her waist, or hangs it over one arm. Her skin is shaded pink to red on her belly, and red from the hips down, but her arms and upper torso are chalk-white. Her hair usually hides two tiny horns that form a crescent upon the crown of her head, and her canine teeth are slim, vampire-like fangs (1-2 points of biting damage, but in a serious fight Cozbi will rarely let an opponent get close enough to allow her to employ this bite).

## GORSON (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 14"

HIT DICE: 126 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 55%

TREASURE TYPE: A, G, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +7*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 231

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Gorson is Geryon's bailiff, and in this capacity is up to his neck in the intrigues and activities of the hierarchy of the hells. A quiet, careful devil who says nothing he does not intend to, and plans ever for the future, Gorson is acutely aware of Geryon's relative weakness in comparison to the other archdevils. As a result, he always acts to strengthen the standing of “The Great Beast,” but in such a way as to make Gorson himself appear useful, reasonable, and non-committal to diabolic observers—future masters or allies—outside of Stygia. He will be quick to deal with intruders to Stygia, but will seek to keep any items seized or any knowledge gained about intruders from others as much as possible.

Gorson can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time, and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *ice storm*, *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *detect invisibility*, *polymorph self*, *invisibility*, *read magic*, *friends*, *hold person*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) wish. Gorson causes *fear* by pointing at a target (one creature per round) within 6" range, and can use a *symbol of stunning* once per day. He can *summon* 1 styx devil (25% chance), 1-3 bone devils (60% chance), or 1-2 barbed devils (65% chance). Gorson regenerates 1 hit point per round.

*Description:* Gorson appears as a yellow-skinned, hawk-nosed man with black-hued eyes, small horns, a tufted lion-like tail, and black hooves. He wears saffron robes and bears a scimitar. His voice is soft and cultured; his advice and arguments always appear sound,

sensible, and convincing. In battle, Gorson appears to let out all of his pent-up feelings and go berserk, exulting in the rough-and-tumble. This is the origin of a saying in the hells, referring to someone hurrying, that the individual looks like "Gorson unleashed."

## **HERODIAS (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 18"

HIT DICE: 129 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 60%

TREASURE TYPE: A, S, G, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12/3-12, *or by weapon type +7*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (8' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 236

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Herodias serves Geryon as magistrate, and is a devil of great pride and ambition. He fully expects to one day be master of the Nine Hells, and favors any change in the present regime as a step in his inexorable rise to the top.

Herodias can employ the following powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, ice storm, wall of ice, animate dead, dimension door, dispel magic, detect magic, detect invisibility, polymorph self, read magic, suggestion, charm person, hold monster, hold person, teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) wish. Herodias causes *fear* by touch (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid). Once per day he can *disintegrate* one creature or item of up to twice his own size, and twice per day he can cast *feeblemind*. Once per day he can employ a *symbol of hopelessness*. He can *summon* 1-4 bone devils

with a 60% chance of success. Herodias is able to regenerate 2 hit points per round.

*Description:* Large and portly, Herodias has a humanoid body of scarlet hue, and massive, muscled arms. He has a small forked tail and small, bat-like (useless) wings. His face is round and sinister and startlingly human in appearance, and his horns are tall, curving inward and then out again like a goat's. His hooves are black.

## **AGARES (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 15"

HIT DICE: 119 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 60%

TREASURE TYPE: G, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +6*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (8' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 232

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Agares, vassal to Geryon, is a duke who commands 31 companies of bone devils. He and Amon, Geryon's most powerful duke, bear no great love one for another, and several times Herodias has had to head off open warfare between the two. Agares customarily fights with a +1 iron-shod staff, but will use any weapons at hand in a fight.

Agares can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and one per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, know alignment, dispel magic, animate dead, ice storm, detect invisibility, slow, cause earthquake, hold person, hold monster, tongues, wall of ice, teleport*, and

(fulfill another's limited) wish. Agares radiates *fear* in a 1" radius, at will (save vs. spell to avoid). Once per day he can use a *symbol of pain*. He can *summon* 1-4 bone devils with a 65% chance of success, and regenerates 1 point of damage every 3 rounds.

*Description:* Agares appears as an old man, and has a brittle, quavering voice. He often bears a hawk at his wrist; these birds he captures or bargains for on the Prime Material Plane when summoned thence, and he enjoys training them as messengers or companions. He has gray-scaled, clawed reptilian feet, and a ruddy facial complexion that deepens to a scarlet body skin hue (usually concealed by robes). Agares has a stumpy, gray reptilian tail, and a humanoid body with curved, irregular-looking ribs that make his ribcage look knotted and deformed. Tufts of gray beard are matched by small, stubby gray horns. Agares has watery red eyes and red hooked nails.

## **MACHALAS (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 16"/21"

HIT DICE: 122 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 60%

TREASURE TYPE: G, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8, *or by weapon type +6*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 60%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 201

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Machalas is a duke commanding 11 companies of barbed devils at the direction of his master Geryon. The least of Geryon's dukes in both personal power



and influence, Machalas encourages the feuding between his fellow dukes Amon and Agares, while taking the side of neither, and hopes to appear Geryon's most steadfast and reliable vassal so as to gain the favor of "The Wild Beast."

Once per round, Machalas can employ one of the following spell-like powers: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *ice storm*, *push*, *blink*, *jump*, *know alignment*, *detect invisibility*, *read magic* *ESP*, *dispel magic*, *animate dead*, *wall of ice*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day he can *cause insanity* (save vs. spell at -1 to avoid; see DMG for types) by touch, and once per day he can use a *symbol of stunning*. He radiates fear in a 1" radius at will. He can (70% chance of success) summon 1-3 barbed devils. He regenerates 1 hit point every 2 rounds.

**Description:** Machalas appears as a tall, thin humanoid with black, scaly skin, a black forked tail, black cloven hooves, large black batlike wings, and large jaws (2-8 damage from bite in combat). A nimble flyer, he usually wields a +2 axe or a normal spear in combat. His horned head is a startling fiery red, and his eyes are slanted and entirely white, so that they appear to have no pupils or irises unless examined very closely. His face appears ugly and bat-like (the jaws most prominent), and his voice is a soft, menacing, hissing tone.

## 6. MALBOLGE

The sixth plane of the Nine Hells is ruled by Baalzebul through his viceroy Moloch (Baalzebul's own abode is not on this plane). Moloch is continually ordered about by his lord and watched by the tribune Bileth, for Baalzebul fears that to allow the Grand Duke to rest undisturbed here for long would enable him to somehow wrest control of Malbolge from the Lord of the Flies.

An outsider might well wonder why Moloch would want to rule such a place, for nothing grows in Malbolge. It is a plane of craggy, tumbled black stone

and ash, filled with stinking vapors, smokes, fire pits, and huge caves and caverns. The air is always hot and choking, and intruders will find that anything flammable remaining in contact with the ground for more than 4 rounds (such as dry wood, paper, hair, dry cloth, and the like) must save versus (normal) fire or burst into flames. Any such substances that are almost continually in contact with the ground (e.g., the soles of boots) must save at the end of every 4-round period.

Malbolge is a noisy place, populated by tormented lemures, malebranche, and occasional spined and styx devils, all of whom suffer at the hands of the cruel Baalzebul (who delights in torture), upon his visits, and the almost equally cruel Moloch. Both

delight in the torture and disfigurement of devils, so many (at least 50%) of the lesser devils found on this plane will hate them to the point of agreeing to active rebellion (if such an effort seems likely to succeed), and such devils are likely (80%) to be missing an arm or leg, or be suffering a similar sort of infirmity, as a result of the amusements of the Grand Duke and his master.

Malbolge is continually patrolled by pairs of malebranche who report to their commander, the pit fiend Bethage; to the legate Tartach; or to Moloch himself (or to Baalzebul, if the Lord of the Flies is present). Intruders are always brought alive to the horned devils' commander for torment and questioning (or the malebranche patrol themselves will suffer in the





intruders' place). Few intruders escape, and fewer still are allowed to live for any length of time, for Baalzebul jealously grasps and guards all power and knowledge that he can, seeking to keep it from other archdevils (particularly Mephistopheles and Asmodeus), so as to eventually gain the power to rule all of the hells.

Moloch moves with his consort *Lilith* from fortress to fortress of the malebranche upon Baalzebul's orders (usually brought by the herald Neabaz). Tartach is Moloch's deputy and ambassador to the vassal dukes and to visitors, and *Bileth* is the tribune installed by Baalzebul as a watchdog upon Moloch and others who would take control of the plane. Baalzebul finds it a continual struggle to retain two planes under his own sway, in a diabolic society where all are ambitious and there are not enough planes to go around. All of the vassals and assistants to Moloch, including Lilith, are regarded as loyal to Baalzebul, although Tartach and Lilith (who feel largely powerless in the current regime) might support a strong bid to seize Malbolge by another archdevil.

The defensive forces of Malbolge consist of nine companies of malebranche under the command of the pit fiend Bethage, and sixteen companies of bone devils led by the pit fiend Herobaal.

## LILITH (Princess of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 16"/30"

HIT DICE: 71 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 80%

TREASURE TYPE: C, I, S

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12, *or by weapon type +5*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: *L (9' tall)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: 222

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Lilith is consort to Moloch, viceroy of the sixth plane of the Nine Hells. She is held in high regard by many witches on the Prime Material Plane, who hold (and keep secret from others) the rituals for summoning her thence. Lilith serves Baalzebul, but her loyalty is not what it used to be; she feels largely powerless in the current regime, and resents being moved here and there at Baalzebul's behest. She often works with the legate Tartach, who is of like mind. Lilith is personally most attractive, and many devils will do her small favors as a result.

Lilith can employ at will the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, animate dead, ESP, dispel magic, read magic, tongues, charm person, detect invisibility, darkness 15' radius, invisibility, suggestion, know alignment, polymorph self, fireball (2d6), teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) wish. Twice per day Lilith can employ a *finger of death*, and once per day she can hurl a (4d6) *lightning bolt*. She radiates *fear* at will in a 2" radius (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid). Lilith can *summon* 1-2 malebranche with a 60% chance of success. Lilith regenerates 3 points of damage every turn.

*Description:* Lilith appears as a beautiful, curvaceous human female of giant stature, save that her eyes are glowing white (pupils and all), her skin is crimson, and she has hooves, a serpent's tail, and small curving horns. She rarely wears garments, cloaking herself in *darkness* (see above) when *summoned* if she deems it necessary. She fights with any weapons available but prefers to strike with her tail, which does 2-12 constriction damage per round; it is long and strong enough to immobilize one M-sized target. She usually bears a slim scimitar or a barbed whip (two 10' strands with metal barbs; these do 1-8 base damage each and can strike the same or

adjacent targets; they can entangle weapons or limbs, but she rarely employs them thus, fearing damage to the weapon). Significantly, a deep lash welt is commonly known in the hells as "Lilith's Mark."

## TARTACH (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 114 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 75%

TREASURE TYPE: C, I, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +7*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: *L (10' tall)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: 212

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Tartach serves Baalzebul as legate to Moloch, the viceroy of Malbolge. His loyalty to Baalzebul is outwardly strong, but Tartach feels relegated to a position of minor importance, when elsewhere in the hells many of lesser strength have higher standing. If an archdevil made a bid to gain control of Malbolge that seemed likely to succeed—or if Moloch were menaced in some way—Tartach might aid the attempt, or at least not move to block it. Tartach has a dark, cruel sense of humor, and enjoys tormenting weaker creatures. He fights with a *flame tongue* sword and a *rope of entanglement*.

Tartach can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, fireball (3d6 damage), dispel magic, detect invisibility, know alignment, hold monster, wall of fire, teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) wish. Once per

day he can use a *symbol of stunning*, and once per day he can *feeblemind* another creature. Tartach causes *fear* by eye contact (save vs. spell at -3 to avoid effects) on any creatures (one target per round) within a 4" radius. He can *summon* 1-2 malebranche (with a 70% chance of success). Tartach regenerates 2 hit points per round.

*Description:* Tartach appears as a human of giant stature wearing a beard and mustache and with stubby, hooked horns on his forehead. He has no tail, but his feet have the pads and fur (but not the claws) of a lion, and his skin is of a fiery orange hue. He wears robes of black or purple silk, and walks with cold dignity.

## **BILETH (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 14"/21"

HIT DICE: 121 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 75%

TREASURE TYPE: C, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12, 2-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (9½' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 224

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Bileth serves Baalzebul as tribune on Malbolge, acting as a watchdog and a check on the actions of Moloch. Bileth speaks with the authority of Baalzebul, but stands apart from the regime run by Moloch, serving as a justiciar independent of the viceroy. Moloch can do nothing against Bileth, and must submit to his commands, but has tried to

undermine the tribune's effectiveness in Malbolge by spreading the word among the malebranche that Bileth is insane.

Bileth can use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *anti-magic shell*, *dispel magic*, *detect invisibility*, *know alignment*, *charm person*, *suggestion*, *ESP*, *tongues*, *detect lie*, *repulsion*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's *limited*) *wish*. Once per day he can use a *death spell*, and twice per day he can cause a *flame strike*. Bileth causes *fear* by touch (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid) and can summon 1-2 malebranche (75% chance of success) or Baalzebul himself (5% chance of success). Bileth regenerates 2 hit points per round.

*Description:* Bileth appears as a large man clad in gilded coat-of-plate. He uses weapons only in a pinch, preferring to fight with his fists (2-12 damage each), backed up by his massive Strength. He is bearded, crimson-skinned, and has horns and hooves. He is tailless, but has large black batlike leathery wings. Once per day he can breathe fire (in a cone 25' long and 10' wide at its end, doing 3-18 damage; save vs. breath weapon for 2-12), but he will do this only if angered or hard-pressed.

## **7. MALADOMINI**

The seventh plane of the hells is also ruled by Baalzebul, who dwells there in a great fortress of black stone. Baalzebul's fortress, Malagard, sprawls for many miles, and consists of countless black spired towers linked by many open and covered bridge-spans that crisscross and slant crazily in all directions. Here Baalzebul is attended by his consort *Baftis*, his herald *Neabaz*, and his marshal *Barbatos*, plus malebranche and many lesser devils of all sorts whom he has commanded to service. Malagard's rooms, passages, and dungeons are so vast and numerous that it is said not even the Lord of the Flies himself has visited all of them. Most of those who escape cells of torment in Malagard flee to the dungeons, seldom penetrated

very deeply by the devils, and many weird creatures are said to roam this lightless underworld.

The fortress above contains many rich and sumptuously furnished chambers, many cells for prisoners and for larvae awaiting use, and rooms upon rooms that are choked with garbage. Filth of all sorts, including carrion and anything that is broken and useless (for none of the devils here can be bothered to repair anything) is carried to neglected areas of Malagard by servant spined devils, and tossed into any unused space, so that entire towers of the fortress are crammed with reeking debris.

Outside, the plane of Maladomini is very similar to Malbolge: hot underfoot (see Malbolge, above, for effects on flammable objects) and filled with stinking vapors, earth tremors and underground explosions, fire pits, smokes, and huge caves and caverns. Maladomini's surface is also despoiled by vast quarries where lesser devils and enslaved prisoners toil ceaselessly to cut the stones from which Malagard and the castles of the malebranche are built. Roads wind and crisscross the landscape from quarry to quarry to the various castles, and the entire plane is littered with the tumbled ruins of long-ago cities and towers, and the ever-larger new works.

Great arched bridges, carved with diabolic faces, span the rivers of molten lava that cut across Maladomini, and from the rivers canals have been cut to carry the liquid fire, so that it encircles every castle of the malebranche with a moat of leaping flames. The rivers of lava are swelled by volcanic cascades and eruptions, and run in the end to a great sea of lava that seems to encircle the plane. Within this sea are a ring of volcanic mountains, and within this ring lies the confusion of Malagard, malebranche castles, ruins, roads, and quarries. Baalzebul is said to have vast collections of gems and plants (the latter tended continually by enslaved creatures) in Malagard, but no green things grow in this plane outside Malagard's walls.

Neabaz (as herald) is the only devil allowed by Baalzebul to move freely about the hells. Barbatos

is charged with the duty of arranging malebranche messengers and weaponry so that the armies of Maladomini can be gathered quickly for battle. These malebranche armies—60 companies under the duke *Abigor*, and 28 under the duke *Zepar*—are customarily occupied with the endless construction of Malagard, other fortresses, and linking roads. Spined devils, typically overseen by styx devils or (rarely) bone devils, feed and tend to the wants of the malebranche laborers. Pit fiends are noticeably absent from Baalzebul's service on Maladomini; the Lord of the Flies suspects all such of being spies for Asmodeus, and is reluctant to allow any of the creatures on the same plane he inhabits.

## **BAFTIS (Princess of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 16"/30"

HIT DICE: 79 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 80%

TREASURE TYPE: D, G

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8 *or by weapon type* +5

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (9' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 220

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Baftis is consort to Baalzebul, The Lord of the Flies. A quiet, subservient consort, she is more than a little afraid of her lord, and rarely acts on her own behalf without specific permission from him. Baftis is somewhat proud and will be outraged if her person or belongings are threatened by lesser creatures. Her



fanged bite does 28 points of damage. She normally carries a bronze spear.

Baftis can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *wall of smoke* (= *fog*), *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *charm person*, *suggestion*, *detect invisibility*, *darkness 15' radius*, *paralyzation* (= *hold person or monster*, by touch, lasts 1-3 turns; save vs. paralyzation to avoid), *teleport*, and (fulfill another's *limited*) *wish*. Once per day Baftis can employ a *finger of death*, and thrice per day she can *heal* herself or others (by touch). She causes *fear* by speaking to a creature within 3" (save vs. spell at -1 to avoid). Baftis can *summon* 1-3 malebranche with a 70% chance of success. She regenerates 1 point of damage every 3 rounds.

*Description:* Baftis appears as a tall, attractive, but rather forbidding human female, save for her tall, spired horns, batlike wings, crimson skin, and hooves. She has no tail, and—unusual for a devil—eyes of lavender hue. She almost always wears loose, open robes; it is said she is sensitive about the lighter shade of her skin down her back—of a human, almost ivory hue. Once a human on the Prime Material Plane uttered an oath mentioning “the pearly spine of Baftis,” and she took that as a summons, appearing and rending the unfortunate with her jaws and claws (which do 1-3 damage each when she is weaponless).



### NEABAZ (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 16"/30"

HIT DICE: 124 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 15%

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6 *or by weapon type +4*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 190

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Neabaz serves Baalzebul as herald, and as such is rarely idle. He respects his master and likes his work, for he is placed in the Nine Hells well above any station he could achieve by his own means, due to his association with the Lord of the Flies.

Physically weak in comparison to other greater devils, Neabaz has by Baalzebul's orders been provided with magical weaponry to augment his means of personal defense. His bare fists do only 1-6 damage each, and his chief attack is blood drain: When his human-like mouth is open, he can extrude a foot-long proboscis from within, and suck blood (1-6 points per round, both upon initial contact and thereafter for as long as he can grip the victim). Neabaz is careful and polite at all times, fearing to offend an archdevil (and any creature may be a polymorphed archdevil, to his slightly paranoid mind).

Neabaz can use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *fireball* (2d6), *dispel magic*, *detect magic*, *read magic*, *read languages*, *tongues*, *know alignment*, *detect invisibility*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited)

*wish*. Once per day he can *slay living* (by touch), and at will he can cause *fear* in a 2" radius. Neabaz can *summon* (40% chance of success) 1-3 malebranche, or (50% chance of success) 1-4 bone devils. He regenerates 1 hit point every 2 rounds.

*Description:* Neabaz appears as a smoothly polite, cold-blooded, and very handsome man—save for his tiny pointed horns and transparent, housefly-like wings. He is customarily garbed in black tunic (open at the shoulders to accommodate his wings) and breeches, with a hat and cape of rich, blood-red silk. The cape is magical, having the ability to give forth an aura of flames (treat as a "cold version" *fire shield* that will not harm Neabaz's wings) up to four times every 24 hours at the wearer's will, each aura lasting up to three rounds as desired. Neabaz also bears a *flame tongue* blade that, when grasped, can *know alignment* of any creature pointed at, and fire 9 *magic missiles* (1 missile per spell) every 24 hours. (These items are believed to be of Prime Material Plane origin.) Neabaz carries other treasure only upon Baalzebul's business and explicit orders.

### BARBATOS (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 16"

HIT DICE: 122 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 60%

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +7*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 212

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Barbatos is the marshal of Maladomini, responsible for all of Baalzebul's armies on that plane, and, through Moloch, administering also the forces of Malbolge. Authoritarian and a shrewd judge both of his warriors and of tactical problems, he has won Baalzebul's respect and limited trust. He has never displayed any personal ambitions, nor (at any time) his true feelings, so that among the hierarchy of the hells his loyalty to his master, and therefore his actions in any change of the status quo, remain unknown. Barbatos moves with lightning speed in battle, having two weapon attacks per round. He carries treasure only upon the orders and specific business of Baalzebul, and wears a gray cloak with a green hood fringed in scarlet.

Barbatos can at will use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *dispel magic*, *detect invisibility*, *detect lie*, *detect magic*, *charm person*, *fly*, *know alignment*, *tongues*, *speak with animals*, *repulsion*, *wall of fire*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day he can use a *symbol of sleep*, and six times per day he can cast a 4d6 *fireball*. Barbatos breathes *fear* in a cone up to 4" distant, 2" wide at its furthest extent (save vs. breath weapon to avoid). He can *summon* 1-4 malebranche with a 70% chance of success, and regenerates 2 hit points per round.

If summoned to the Prime Material Plane, Barbatos will always appear with 2-8 malebranche. On that plane, he can track as a ranger, *pass without trace*, and *move silently* if he wills; break wizard locks by touch; and *detect treasure* (of a metal or mineral nature, as in the *wand of metal and mineral detection*) in a 3" radius. Those who know how to *summon* him are few, because he and his malebranche guard can usually destroy them or bear them to the hells for torment.

*Description:* Barbatos appears as a bearded, horned man-like giant with crimson skin, black hooves, and a tail. His eyes are green, and he talks with a rich, persuasive voice.

## ABIGOR (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*  
 NO. APPEARING: 1  
 ARMOR CLASS: -2  
 MOVE: 14"/22"  
 HIT DICE: 120 hit points  
 % IN LAIR: 65%  
 TREASURE TYPE: A, I  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-16 or by weapon type +7  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*  
 SIZE: L (7½' tall)  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: 210  
 Attack/Defense modes: All/all

Abigor is a duke in the service of Baalzebul, commanding 60 companies of malebranche. He enjoys destroying other creatures in battle, and will not miss a chance to fight a weaker opponent. He wields a +2 battleaxe and a mace, and if he loses these in a skirmish he will employ anything available. Weaponless, he strikes with one massive fist while warding off attacks with the other. A blow from his hand does 2-16 damage.

Abigor can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *speak with dead* (who can have been dead for up to 600 days), *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *know alignment*, *tongues*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day Abigor can employ a *symbol of stunning*, and once per day he can *spell turn* (as in *ring of spell turning*) a spell cast at him back at the caster (note that he can do this even with a spell that his magic resistance has protected him from). Abigor causes *fear* by touch (save vs. spell at -1 to avoid). He can *summon* 1-2 malebranche with a 70% chance of success, and regenerates 2 hit points per round.

*Description:* Abigor appears as an ochre-skinned, hairless humanoid with ruddy diabolic features, small horns, black hooves, and a forked tail. He has large crimson batlike wings, and a loud, bellowing voice.

## ZEPAR (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*  
 NO. APPEARING: 1  
 ARMOR CLASS: -3  
 MOVE: 14"  
 HIT DICE: 118 hit points  
 % IN LAIR: 65%  
 TREASURE TYPE: A, P  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See below*  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*  
 SIZE: M (5' tall)  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: 217  
 Attack/Defense modes: All/all

Zepar is a duke in the service of Baalzebul, and leads 28 companies of malebranche. Vicious and arrogant, he seldom engages in combat, but uses his magical powers and his servants to bully weaker creatures. When in a black mood, he wades into the hapless lemures and dishes out all the punishment he can deliver. He fights with a hand axe and a short sword, both envenomed like those of an erinyes (save vs. poison or faint for 1-6 melee rounds).

Zepar can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *spectral force*, *blink*, *fly*, *detect invisibility*, *tongues*, *suggestion*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. His touch can (at will) cause one of the following: *fear* (save vs. spell at -1 or cower on the spot, dropping weapons, if save fails);

*lust* (cease hostilities and approach the first creature of like race and opposite sex; this effect lasts only 4 rounds and ceases in any case when the affected person is attacked—by Zepar, the intended object of his or her affections, or another); or a *shocking grasp* (11-18 points of damage). Once per day Zepar can *polymorph other* (save at -1) and once per day employ a *symbol of insanity*. He can *summon* 1-3 malebranche with a 70% chance of success, and regenerates 1 hit point per round.

*Description:* Zepar appears as a slight, dark-complexioned man dressed in scarlet armor, with a grotesque clubfoot and a forked tail. He has small horns (concealed by his helm) and speaks in a grating, contemptuous voice. Beneath his armor (without which he is AC -2) is crimson skin, and a "normal" human foot that has retractile black catlike claws (1-4 raking damage if unbooted).

## 8. CANIA

The frigid eighth plane of the hells is ruled by Mephistopheles, the mighty Lord of No Mercy or Cold Lord. This scheming archdevil rules the frozen wastes of Caina with the help of his consort *Baalphegor* and his staff: *Barbas*, chamberlain of Mephistar (Mephistopheles' iron citadel) and guardian of Mephistopheles' wealth and treasures; *Adonides*, steward of Caina, who oversees the administration and defense of the realm; and *Bele*, justiciar, who sits in judgement of all disputes within Caina. Mephistopheles is cunning enough to allow the appearance of justice—and thus win the ease and resulting loyalty of his vassals, as well as reassurance for other devils elsewhere in the Nine Hells who might consider supporting him in a bid to overthrow Asmodeus, showing them that an independent judiciary would be installed under the rule of Mephistopheles, were he to become Overlord of Hell.

Malebranche and spined devils staff the iron citadel of Mephistar, which perches high in the icy



mountains at the heart of the plane. Much of Caina is a land of ice-covered boulders and mountains, ruins of stone (for it took the devils long to learn that nothing on the glaciers could withstand the inexorable ice), and sprawling glaciers. *Bifrons*, one of the dukes of Caina, rules from a cold blue palace carved out of the slow-moving ice of a rift in the center of the great glacier Nargus. This glacier is staffed by the ice devils who populate the plane, and by spined devils, who perform the most menial tasks.

Mephistopheles is one of the most careful and suspicious of the archdevils, and the halls and chambers of Mephistar are patrolled and inhabited by devils

in accordance with a strict schedule of activities. Only Bele, Barbas, and Adonides are free of this iron regimentation, and Mephistopheles wants to know where they are and what they are doing at all times. All three devils delight in deceiving their lord as to precisely where they are and what they are doing, but such deceptions are always small things, for they dare go no further in light of the possible punishments.

A visitor will find Caina numbingly cold—without heat, most warm-blooded creatures can only survive for a few hours before suffering chills, later frostbite, and then death. Certainly any such creature that goes to sleep, falls unconscious, or is rendered immobile in

the open without heat will die shortly. Ice devils will be immediately attracted to any fire (note that the raw materials for such a blaze will have to be brought by the visitor, since no combustibles are to be found), and will attack without hesitation. If far from Nargus, an ice devil is not likely to inform Mephistopheles or his staff of the existence of intruders unless there is a chance that other devils have seen them too, and are likely to report them. If a party should escape a lone ice devil, the latter will not warn others of their presence, but will itself remain alert for signs of them.

Were it not for the cold and the lack of food (some tales speak of *remorhaz* or “glacier worms” in Caina, but if any exist they must be very rare), Caina would offer intruders many inviting places of concealment—there are many hidden valleys in the mountains, and countless ice-caves. Corpses, it should be noted, will freeze and be preserved perfectly, so killers of all sorts are advised to seek deep crevasses or snowbanks to conceal such remains.

The dukes of Caina are *Hutijin*, who commands two mighty legions of pit fiends, the nobles of Caina (including *Silcharde*, *Bechard*, *Guland*, *Sphandor*, and *Buldumech*); *Bifrons*, who commands 26 companies of ice devils in Nargus; and *Nexroth*, who leads 16 companies of malebranche. The pit fiends and malebranche dwell in the rocky spires and pits of the outermost fringes of Caina. These are hot regions crisscrossed by colder, steaming, slimy waters which at length give way to marches of icy ooze which rise at length into the frozen mountains of the plane’s interior.

The strength and ambition of the pit fiends (particularly those named above) are a weakness in Mephistopheles’ control over his own plane—a weakness encouraged and delighted in by his foes—particularly *Baalzebul*, who has spies among the malebranche, and seeks to foster unrest. Only a few of the pit fiends remain strictly loyal to Mephistopheles (without *Hutijin*, the Cold Lord would soon face open revolt and could not hold the plane). Most seek to gain





the most power they can in any change of rulership, and favor dissent and change among the archdevils as the only way to better their own lot. None have openly defied Mephistopheles yet, but a time will come... unless, of course, Mephistopheles defeats Asmodeus, whereupon their loyalty will be loudly conspicuous. Mephistopheles is openly distrustful of Nexroth, who is totally selfish and loyal only to himself; he will do whatever seems best for his own advancement. Nexroth retains his command only because he seems the most reliable of the pit fiends, and Mephistopheles dares not allow open conflict within Caina for fear that another archdevil would take advantage of the situation. If not for this, the Cold Lord would cheerfully shift the command whenever it suited him, playing the pit fiends off against one another indefinitely.

## **BAALPHEGOR (Princess of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 19"/29"

HIT DICE: 82 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: R, X, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%

INTELLIGENCE: *Supra-genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (5½' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 229

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Baalphegor is consort to Mephistopheles, and a most highly regarded she-devil. Personally attractive (and a practiced diplomat), she is charming in manner and

artful in thought; she has invented many of the strategies and devices used in the hells. Asmodeus regards her as one of his most valuable assets, and tolerates the machinations of Mephistopheles largely because of her. Baalphegor's own desires are seldom revealed; she appears loyal to the hells and devoted to Mephistopheles, and manages to avoid making a distinction between the two.

Baalphegor can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *charm person*, *suggestion*, *detect invisibility*, *enchant an item*, *permanency*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's *limited*) *wish*. Once per day Baalphegor can employ a *finger of death*, once per day unleash *chain lightning*, and once per day *heal* herself. She causes *fear* (2" range) by pointing at the desired creature (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid). She can summon 1-2 devils with a 75% chance of success. Baalphegor regenerates 1 point of damage every 4 rounds.

*Description:* Baalphegor is a musical-voiced, beautiful female, apparently human, save for her ruby-red eyes, forked tail, and slim, delicate leathery wings. Her feet are human in appearance, and she is sleek and curvaceous, with cinnamon-brown skin. She appears young and carefree, but when angered her light voice can crack like a whip, and her eyes flash fire.

## **BELE (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 14"/20"

HIT DICE: 112 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 95%

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +8*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 232

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Bele serves Mephistopheles as justiciar of Caina, spending most of his time in the fortress of Mephistar, dispensing impartial justice within the Cold Lord's realm. Some in Caina (among the pit fiends) openly doubt if Bele's justice is impartial—ut it is true that Mephistopheles does not intervene on a case-by-case basis to overrule or influence his judgments. Mephistopheles and Bele do agree upon (and periodically discuss) the basic principles and some specific details of what precisely "justice," in Caina, is and should be. As a result, Bele's judgments are opposed to any rebellious or disorderly actions, although they occasionally stand against Mephistopheles' orders. Perhaps the most important fact in the matter is that Bele would not have his present office without the permission of Mephistopheles; if Bele's judgments ever run too much against his master's will, that office will end. Bele has no real treasure, on Mephistopheles' orders.

Bele can use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *ice storm*, *ESP*, *detect lie*, *know alignment*, *tongues*, *read magic*, *read languages*, *hold person*, *hold monster*, *fools gold*, *legend lore*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's *limited*) *wish*. Twice per day he can cause a *flame strike*, and once per day he can *banish* (as in the spell *banishment*) a creature (or creatures) of up to 16 levels or hit dice to its own plane. Bele causes *fear* by voice tone in a 6" radius (save vs. spell at -3 to avoid). He can summon 1-3 ice devils (60% chance of success), or 1-2 pit fiends (30%). Bele regenerates 1 hit point per round.

*Description:* Bele appears as a tall, handsome, hollow-eyed man with ivory skin, a curling beard and pencil-thin mustache, a low, nasal voice, tiny horns, and long black robes. Beneath the robes are concealed a short forked tail, a crimson-skinned lower torso, and a belt bearing Bele's black rod of office (equivalent to a *rod of smiting*) and a *dagger of venom*. When Bele disrobes, his leathery wings can spread to a surprisingly large (20') wingspan.

## **ADONIDES (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 16"/28"

HIT DICE: 121 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 55%

TREASURE TYPE: R, X, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +7*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (8' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 228

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Adonides serves Mephistopheles as the steward of Caina, responsible for the security and internal stability of the realm. His experiences thus far have made him mistrust all pit fiends (even watching the dukes Nexroth and Hutijin with a wary eye), and to suspect every ice devil and malebranche of being a spy for Baalzebul. Adonides is naturally cruel and high-handed, and—since Barbas is chamberlain of Mephistar, and the steward has no authority there—the steward of Caina spends much of his time roaming the plane with a guard of 16 ice devils, searching for and punishing intruders and those

who misbehave or act to betray Mephistopheles. In battle Adonides bears a twisted, spiked +1 staff (1-8 +1 damage, +7 if Adonides wields it) with which he can strike twice (against 2 different targets, if he so wishes) in a round.

Adonides can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *ice storm*, *wall of ice*, *cone of cold* (1d4 +16 damage), *lightning bolt* (4d6), *detect lie*, *know alignment*, *dispel magic*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's *limited*) *wish*. Once per day Adonides can *heal* himself (or another, by touch), and once per day he can use a *symbol of stunning*. He causes *fear* by pointing at the desired creature (one target per round; save vs. spell at -1 to avoid), and can *summon* 1-6 ice devils (70% chance of success) when desired. He regenerates 2 hit points per round.

*Description:* Adonides appears as a young, long-haired, darkly handsome man of giant stature. He has unusual glittering black eyes and a fanged grin. The hair hides two small horns; Adonides wears robes to hide his short forked tail and scarlet torso.

## **BARBAS (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 16"

HIT DICE: 110 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 95%

TREASURE TYPE: R, X, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +7*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (10' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 224

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Barbas serves Mephistopheles as chamberlain, running the citadel of Mephistar and seeing to the security of Mephistopheles' treasure. Proud and arrogant, Barbas is as openly cruel as any devil in Caina is allowed to be under the rule of Mephistopheles. Totally unscrupulous and dishonest, Barbas is kept in check—and the treasure in his care where it is supposed to be—by the combined scrutiny of Bele, Adonides, and Mephistopheles himself. He retains his position by the brilliant deceptions he practices in the name of security, catching or misdirecting the spies of other archdevils and deflecting the greed of those native to Caina. Barbas is lazy and gross-bodied, but snake-quick in battle, and attacks twice per round with his *staff of striking*. He also bears a goad, which is an iron rod topped with a hook at one end. It was fashioned by a chaotic good smith, and does 4-24 damage to devils and other LE creatures, but only 2-8 damage to others (of S or M size; only 1-6 vs. L). Barbas also bears a *dagger of venom* (perhaps more than one) hidden about his person.

Barbas can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of ice*, *lightning bolt* (2d6), *detect lie*, *ESP*, *tongues*, *hold person*, *shield*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's *limited*) *wish*. Once per day Barbas can use a *symbol of insanity*, and once per day he can *slay living* (by touch; saving throw at +1). Barbas causes *fear* by eye contact (at will, one victim per round, 4" effective range). He can *summon* 1-3 ice devils (60% chance of success), or 2-8 spined devils (70%). He regenerates 1 hit point per round.

*Description:* Barbas appears as a giant, bearded man with large lips and an enormous belly. He wears voluminous robes, which conceal his forked tail, hooves, and crimson skin covered with thick, oily black hair.

## BIFRONS (Duke of Hell)

MOVE: 18"

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

HIT DICE: 141 hit points

% IN LAIR: 65%

TREASURE TYPE: R, Q(x6), Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See below*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 228

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

Bifrons is a mighty duke, leading 26 companies of ice devils into battle at the behest of Mephistopheles. The Cold Duke rules the glaciers of Caina's interior from his ice palace in Nargus, and appears both vigilant and loyal to Mephisto. Bifrons is a clear-headed, rather dispassionate philosopher. He enjoys arguments and contests of reason and logic, but does not let these distract him from more pragmatic concerns. (Bear in mind that Bifrons is exceptionally intelligent and lawful evil, and will approach and leave all such arguments convinced that a social order wherein the stronger rule the weaker is the only practical way to exist, and that good promotes incompetence and mediocrity.)

Bifrons collects gems, enjoys skillful ice sculpture (although doing none himself), has a natural knack for navigating (knowing where he is, even on the Prime Material Plane, and intuitively knowing accurate compass directions), and, has the awesome strength of a cloud giant. He bears an envenomed scimitar (with effects as for the weapon of an erinyes) and a flail (each doing +7 damage in Bifron's hands),

but usually fights barehanded, each fist striking for 4-24 damage. He is immune to cold damage of all types (including magic and dragon breath).

Bifrons can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *dispel magic*, *ice storm*, *cone of cold* (6d4 +6 damage), *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day he can unleash *chain lightning* (7d6 damage), and once per day use a *symbol of stunning*. He causes *fear* (6" range) by eye contact (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid). He can *summon* 1-6 ice devils with a 70% chance of success. (If Bifrons is encountered in Nargus itself, 9-12 ice devils will be in attendance about him.) Optionally, he can *summon* 1-8 spined devils (60% chance of success). Bifrons regenerates 2 hit points per round.

*Description:* Bifrons appears as a wingless, gray-skinned and heavily muscled devil with stubby horns on his brow, a humanoid torso, and a snake-like lower body (from the hip down, with no legs). He has totally white, slanted eyes, large nostrils and mouth, and a deep, rumbling voice.

## 9. NESSUS

The vast and gloomy ninth and nethermost plane of the hells is known as Nessus, or Cocytus (after the lake therein), and is the personal realm of Asmodeus, Overlord of the hells. Asmodeus inhabits a grand palace, a fey court of darksome beauty, which rests upon the floor of the lowest rift in Nessus. If this abode has a name, it is little used and unknown to men. It is known that smoke rises from its very stones when they are trod by one not of lawful evil alignment, and that Asmodeus has gathered here all objects that he finds beautiful (including much seen as beautiful by man).

It is known that Asmodeus can summon each archdevil to his court here, once a year, but more details of his palace are few indeed, understandably, since few travelers return whole to the Prime

Material Plane after being in the clutches of the Great Devil himself. All manner of beings may be found within its extensive halls, for Asmodeus, a master strategist, makes use of all the powers and talents available in the hells to further his own ends. His bodyguards and personal servants are the mighty pit fiends; outside of the palace, one is more likely to encounter them in Nessus than any other creature, for they are constantly flying here and there at the Overlord's bidding. Knowledge of the geography of Nessus is similarly incomplete and possibly inaccurate, but it is known to be a rocky, misty realm that holds many dangers for the unwary.

Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, winds aimlessly about Nessus; no mortal has ever found its source or outflow. All creatures who touch its clear green waters (except devils, who are immune to Lethe's power) must save vs. poison or be permanently *feeble-minded* (only a *wish*, *alter reality*, or *limited wish* will reverse this), and even if cured, victims will lose all memories of the time preceding their cure. Some say that the river Lethe flows through dimensional space in some incomprehensible way, and thereby also flows on the Prime Material Plane. It may thus provide another entry and exit to the deepest plane of the hells—but if any have traveled this route and survived, they do not talk of it.

The lake of Cocytus lies far from the palace of the Overlord, high up in a bowl of rock surrounded by crags. It is frozen; a glassy-smooth surface of ice tens of feet thick—and within the ice are trapped the bodies of all who have ever ventured across it, for the ice always rises suddenly, in jaws, to engulf them. A *dispel magic* or *slow* will slow this action enough for a creature to escape or be helped clear, in haste, and a *wall of force* or even a *wall of ice* will temporarily jam the jaws open and also permit escape. A *shatter* spell or the physical force wielded by most creatures will not affect the ice, but a *crystalbrittle* spell cast upon it will render the ice fragile (to the extent of the spell's area of effect), subject to the effects of all normal



weapons and implements, and a *hammer of thunderbolts* will shatter it easily (perhaps also damaging a trapped victim). Any magical and/or natural combination of strength equal to a storm giant's (such as the natural might of Asmodeus or Geryon) can affect the ice of Cocytus.

On the slopes between the crags that surround the Lake of Fear (Cocytus) and the winding river Lethe stands a huge wood of trees whose leaves are always burning, but are not consumed by the flames. A blazing branch taken from one of these trees will burn—equal in heat and fire effects to a normal blaze, doing 1–4 points of burn damage per contact—ceaselessly, even if taken to another plane. Water, cold, winds, lack of air, etc., will not douse it, nor will water- or cold-related spells. Nothing short of a *limited wish* will douse it while in the hells; outside the hells, a *dispel magic* or contact with the area of effect of a *protection from evil* (for such a branch is strongly evil) will extinguish it forever, but *affect normal fires* will have no effect. If a branch is broken off, it will bleed, yielding a small quantity of blue-green ichor, a substance fabled in magical lore as an ingredient in many potions, spell inks, and processes for the making of magical items.

Within the course of the river Lethe is the central area of Nessus, a region of twisted and scorched rock broken by many rifts and knife-edged ridges, and within this area the firewinds sweep. A firewind is a permanent *wall of fire* (as in the spell) of triple strength and damage, typically up to a quarter of a mile in length, that sweeps over the ground in the forefront of a howling wind (26" movement rate). The firewinds blow at random, and may join or break apart in accordance with the topography of the land or for no apparent reason. Usually they will sweep over a creature on the ground in a single round, enveloping it briefly for 4–24 points of damage (save for half damage). Loose garments, small birds, and so forth may be blown away with the firewind, but in its wake there is relative calm. The bones of many

creatures litter this inner desolation of Nessus, and a traveler will find that the rifts grow deeper as one heads inward, so that the bottom of the lowest plane of the hells is a huge bowl or gulf. Here the air is always smoky, and the firewinds howl, and here, at the bottom of the lowest rift (where the firewinds do not reach, but pass overhead) is the infernally grand palace of Asmodeus. Some sages say that in the center of the palace is a great *gate* that will allow transport from this place to any plane (of the user's choice) in the multiverse. This gate, they say, will allow passage of any number or amount of creatures and objects, and Asmodeus cannot destroy it or affect its operation. (Devils and other creatures of lawful evil alignment attempting to use it, regardless of power,

will be destroyed.) Some believe that the Overlord deliberately built his palace atop it so as to control access to and from the hells; somewhere in the Prime Material Plane, it is hinted, lies the way into the Nine Hells via this gate. The existence of this gate is supported by the legend that to escape the hells, one must descend to the deepest part of the plane. The maker of the gate is unknown, but is probably one or more of the greater gods.

Asmodeus rarely leaves his palace, making his will known and acted upon by servants of apparently unshakeable loyalty. *Adramalech* serves him as chancellor, recording the numbers, acquisitions, and transformations of the lemurs and larvae, torments suffered by devils, the names of those who serve the



diabolic on other planes, and the making and terms of all pacts and contracts. The Keeper of the Records answers to no one but the Overlord himself, and has his own tower in the palace, ringed at all times by six pit fiends. This guard detail is ordered by the pit fiend Baalberith, major domo of the palace, probably at the behest of Asmodeus, and is little liked by Adramalech. A similar guard rings the chamber or person of *Bensozia*, consort to Asmodeus, at all times. Another 54 pit fiends round out the palace guard. *Phongor* is the most feared devil in Nessus, after Asmodeus himself; he serves Asmodeus as inquisitor, and little information escapes his probing questions and methods of persuasion.

The greatest pit fiend of all, the awesomely scarred, broken-winged Alastor, serves Asmodeus as executioner. His strength is that of a storm giant's, and he never speaks. It is said in the hells that if all were swept away and Asmodeus could choose but one devil as a companion, that one would be neither consort nor lieutenant, but Alastor the Grim. Another pit fiend, Martinet, is constable of Nessus, responsible for the personal armies of Asmodeus. These armies camp eternally around the palace, and their generals confer often with the Overlord. These proud dukes are: *Buer*, who commands 15 companies of pit fiends; *Morax*, leader of nine such companies; *Bune*, general of 30 companies of malebranche; *Rimmon*, head of five companies of ice devils; and *Zagum*, leader of 30 companies of barbed devils. It is said that the nycadaemon Daerith once appeared unannounced over the lake of Cocytus and flew toward the palace of Asmodeus, and before it reached the crags about the lake was destroyed utterly, torn apart bodily by pit fiends on patrol. With such guardians, it is small wonder why the mysteries of the plane are so many, and the visitors who return whence they came so few.

## **BENSOZIA (Queen of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 18"/26"

HIT DICE: 86 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 95%

TREASURE TYPE: C, R, X

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 261

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Bensozia is the consort of Asmodeus, and staunchly supports her mate. She is personally the most powerful of the consorts, but her influence is entirely linked with that of Asmodeus; it is said that "Bensozia speaks not, save by the leave of the Great One." Bensozia seems happy in her position, although she is not always physically with Asmodeus, but her natural manner is coldly polite and haughty, seldom revealing her true feelings. She bears a brass scepter that does 4-16 damage to all creatures of good alignment, 3-12 damage to devils, and 2-8 damage to others. Empty-handed, she strikes with her hands for 2-12 damage.

Bensozia can use the following spell-like powers at will, once per round and only one at a time: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *fireball* (3d6), *lightning bolt* (2d6), *dispel magic*, *charm person*, *charm monster*, *suggestion*, *ESP*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *identify*, *sending* (to Asmodeus only), *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Twice per day Bensozia can employ a *finger of death*, and once per day *heal* herself. She causes *fear* (6" range) by speaking to an individual (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid), and can *summon*

1-2 pit fiends (50% chance), or 1-4 malebranche (30% chance). Bensozia regenerates 1 point of damage every 3 rounds.

*Description:* Bensozia is a tall statuesque, human-appearing devil. She has long white hair, large glistening black eyes, scarlet skin, large brown hooves, and a forked tail. She always wears loose black robes with a scarlet silk lining within, and, as Queen of Hell, a diadem of beaten gold set with large rubies (total value 26,000 gp).

## **ADRAMALECH (Chancellor of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 14"

HIT DICE: 133 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: I, S, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +6*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 245

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Adramalech, the cruel and malicious Chancellor of Hell, aids Asmodeus greatly from his tower in the Overlord's palace in Nessus. The Keeper of Records answers only to Asmodeus, and spends much of his time observing (through his spies and openly recognized informants, the latter including all pit fiends in the hierarchy of the hells) events in the infernal regions and elsewhere. The Infernal Records (sometimes called "The Book of Fire" by men, although the records actually take up many folios and papers) contain all true names of devils known to Adramalech

(note that he has memorized those of all dukes and archdevils in self-defense; thus, none will attack him). He also records the numbers, acquisitions, and transformations of lemures and larvae; torments suffered by devils; the ranks and powers of all devils and suspected or known alliance or deceptions among them; the names, ranks, and locations of all who serve the devils on other planes; and the making and terms of all pacts and contracts.

When not engaged in updating the records or keeping an ear to the ground, Adramalech likes to amuse himself by watching weaker creatures—particularly humans and elves brought from the Prime Material Plane—being tortured and slain by devils in the dungeons of the palace or in the encampments of the infernal armies outside its walls. Adramalech carries a +2 staff which can *slay living* (save at +1) by touch, and *disintegrate* (devils save at -1) by touch once in every 6 turns. His loyalty to Asmodeus is not entire—he often tries to conceal small items of information or magical items seized from intruders from the Overlord, under the guise of absent-mindedness.

Adramalech can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *fireball* (3d6), *dispel magic*, *detect lie*, *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, *ESP*, *know alignment*, *read magic*, *read languages*, *tongues*, *write*, *explosive runes*, *animate dead*, *sending* (to Asmodeus only), *teleport*, *identify*, *anti-magic shell*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day Adramalech can unleash a *meteor swarm*, and once per day he can use a *symbol of insanity*. He causes *fear* by pointing at a creature within 4" and speaking (save vs. spell at -1 to avoid). He can *summon* 1-3 pit fiends (55% chance) or 1-6 malebranche (50% chance). Adramalech regenerates 1 hit point every round.

**Description:** Adramalech appears as an aged, gray-bearded and balding man, with cold, wet eyes that change hue from emerald green through black

to fiery orange depending upon his mood (enjoyment to fury, respectively). He has normal human feet and hands, small crimson barbed horns and a crimson forked tail. He wears loose, flowing robes of green, purple, russet, or black, and beneath these is a humanoid body that is crimson and scaly down the back, and yellow-green and slimy down the front.

### PHONGOR (Inquisitor of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 16"

HIT DICE: 129 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 80%

TREASURE TYPE: Q(x2), Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +5*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 249

Attack/Defense modes: *All/all*

Phongor is the dreaded Inquisitor of Hell; he is responsible directly to Asmodeus for the provision of complete and accurate news of the hells and other planes. To do this, he has subverted the spies of Adramalech (so that they report first, and most fully, to him), enlisted spies of his own (and spies to watch his spies; he trusts no one), and perfected the arts of torture on devils, the lesser creatures of the hells, and intruders alike. Little escapes his arts, and "few return whole in body or mind from Phongor's gentle grasp," as it is said in the hells. In the depths of the palace of the Overlord, Phongor employs many delicate and brutal instruments of torture. While in the

palace, he will always have two pit fiends as bodyguards and 6-11 servant spined devils.

In battle Phongor can employ any weapon without "to hit" or damage penalties, but he favors his envenomed whip (see the listing for erinyes in the *Monster Manual* for effects of the venom). The weapon is a cat-of-nine-tails with tempered wire, rather than cord, as its strands. Each strand does 1-4 points base damage, and all nine strands are capable of striking the same target in the same round. Phongor himself can feel no pain, and thus is unaffected by attacks until physically disabled.

Phongor can use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *fireball* (2d6), *lightning bolt* (2d6), *wall of fire*, *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *detect lie*, *know alignment*, *ESP*, *tongues*, *detect invisibility*, *identify*, *sending* (to Asmodeus only), *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. By touch, Phongor can either *cause disease* (see DMG for diseases), *putrefy food & drink*, or attack with a *shocking grasp*. He can choose from these three effects freely and change between them without limit. Six times per day he can use a *symbol of pain*, and thrice a day he can *heal* himself or another (by touch). Once per day he can employ *true seeing* (lasts for 1-12 rounds, as he wills, but is ended immediately if he uses another of the above powers). Phongor radiates *fear* in a 4" radius at will (save at -2 to avoid; this power affects even devils below the rank of duke). He can *summon* 1-2 pit fiends (60% chance) or 1-6 spined devils (65% chance). Phongor regenerates 1 hit point per round.

**Description:** Phongor appears as a dead-white skinned man with glittering pink eyes, a hoarse, hissing voice, tiny horns and oily black hair, a forked tail, and red hooves. He wears open purple or black robes, and a belt to carry his whip.



## **BUER (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 22"

HIT DICE: 126 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: H, Q(x4)

NO. OF ATTACKS: *See below*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See below*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (10' long)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 226

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Buer is a duke in the service of Asmodeus, commanding 15 companies of pit fiends. He is inclined to melancholy demeanor and, although always polite in speech, appears to delight in practical jokes. It should be remembered, however, that his words and actions are perfectly controlled, and are generally intended to further a specific aim or purpose. His loyalty to Asmodeus has never been questioned, and he keeps a careful eye on the whereabouts and activities of his forces.

Buer can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *flame arrow* (by touch), *animate dead*, *lightning bolt* (4d6), *dispel magic*, *fly*, *remove* (or *bestow*) *curse* (by touch), *find familiar* (for another; imps only), *cure* (or *cause*) *disease* (by touch), *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *know alignment*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Twice per day he can cause a *flame strike*, and once per day he can use a *symbol of hopelessness* or one of *discord*. He causes *fear* by his bellow (6" effective range; save vs. spell to avoid), and can summon 1-3

pit fiends (70% chance). Buer regenerates 2 hit points per round.

*Description:* Buer resembles a centaur (human torso with arms, horse's body) with gleaming silver skin and white hair. He has staring red eyes and red horns, and his four hooves are cloven and have crimson fetlocks. He wears a belt about his body, carrying a +2 mace and a +1 bow; the belt also carries four quivers (two on each side) containing 20 arrows each. He can *flame arrow* and fire such a shaft in one round, or fire two arrows, or strike twice with his mace.

From Buer's hips (that is, the upper portion of his back, just above the forelegs) protrude six 10'-long prehensile tentacles, which have no strength to grip but can flail at any opponents (up to six separate targets) within 1". Each tentacle slaps for 2-8 corrosive, stinging acidic damage per strike. Each tentacle can withstand 6 cumulative points of damage before being severed. Note that Buer will regenerate damage to these along with the rest of his body.

## **BUNE (Duke of Hell)**

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 12"/18"

HIT DICE: 136 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: I, Q(x10), W, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5 or by weapon type +8

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 229

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Bune is a duke in the service of Asmodeus, commanding 30 companies of malebranche. He is greedy (fond of material wealth) and enjoys manipulating lesser beings of all sorts (including his warriors). His loyalty to Asmodeus is solid, but he is naturally "cheeky" to and defiant of all beings of whom he is scared (in other words, those stronger than himself). Asmodeus tolerates this because of all the dukes, Bune is the quickest and most careful in the execution of his orders. Bune is content with his position, sees Asmodeus as the most powerful archdevil and thus the safest lord, and will not betray him.

Bune can use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *tongues*, *locate object*, *flaming sphere*, *magic missile* (6 missiles per spell), *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day Bune can cast a *cone of cold* (9d4 +9), once per day *heal* himself, and once per day use a *symbol of death*. Bune causes *fear* (save vs. spell at - 2 to avoid) by touch, and can *summon* 1-4 malebranche (70% chance of success) or a pit fiend (40% chance of success) to his aid. Bune regenerates 2 hit points per round.

*Description:* Bune appears as a malebranche, except that his scaled body is green in hue (coppery on the belly and loins), and his talons are silvery in color. Bune's head, however, is human—with doglike furry ears and a great griffonlike beak. His voice is high-pitched and lilting, although he will screech if he becomes infuriated, and he is an excellent mimic of other beings.

Bune fights with a saw-edged sword, shaped somewhat like a leaping flame (2-8 base damage), and a trident. He bears the sword and any treasure (in a pouch) by means of a belt, but rarely wears any other clothing. Bune's bite does 2-5 damage; if he is unarmed, his claws do 2-8 damage each, but he will snatch up a weapon at any opportunity.

## MORAX (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 12"/16"

HIT DICE: 135 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: H, I, Y

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12/3-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 223

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

Morax is a duke in the service of Asmodeus, leading nine companies of pit fiends. He is a being of few (and well-chosen) words, but exults in a good fight.

He often wrestles with the pit fiends under his command, hurling them about and roaring. He is respected by the pit fiends for his fairness to them and his loyalty to Asmodeus. He despises weakness, and is angered by creatures who bluff or presume to have a strength or station they do not possess or deserve. Morax respects Bifrons, Geryon, Asmodeus, and other physically strong devils, and has little time for "sneaks" or those who "hide behind magic" (for example, Phongor and Adramalech, in Nessus). Morax and Alastor are good friends, and will aid each other when one is in need, knowledge of the situation and opportunity permitting.

Morax can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *fireball* (2d6), *dispel magic*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day he can cause *earthquake*, and once per

day use a *symbol of stunning*. He causes *fear* by touch (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid), and can *summon* 1-3 pit fiends (75% chance) at will. Morax regenerates 2 hit points per round.

*Description:* Morax is a cloven-hooved, humanoid devil. He has a bull-like head, with massive curved horns (somewhat like Moloch), batlike wings, and heavily muscled arms. He has a short forked tail. His entire body is a dark, dirty brown in hue, and his eyes are scarlet. He has a cluster of 2-inch-long spines on his chest, and in battle loves to hug victims against this cluster (piercing and crushing damage of 4-24 points per round). He prefers to fight by hurling two throwing axes and then closing with opponents to use his hands (3-12 each). If he wields a weapon (a rare thing), Morax does damage by weapon type +7.

## RIMMON (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -4

MOVE: 9"

HIT DICE: 125 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: Q(x6), R

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8/2-8/4-16

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 224

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

Rimmon is a duke serving Asmodeus. He leads five companies of ice devils in battle, and appears as an ice devil with a handsome, human-like diabolic horned head. He is nasty and sarcastic and little liked

in the hells, but he is loyal to Asmodeus and has little personal pride.

Rimmon rarely fights with a trident, getting 2 attacks per round, one for weapon damage +6 and the other 4-16 for his tail. Unarmed, he does 2-8 damage with each set of claws plus 4-16 for his tail. Rimmon can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *fly*, *dispel magic*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *wall of ice*, *ice storm*, *cone of cold* (5d4 +5 damage), *lightning bolt* (4d6 damage), *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Twice per day he can unleash *chain lightning* (7d6), and once per day he can use a *symbol of pain*. Rimmon radiates *fear* in a 2" radius at will, has 60' infravision, and regenerates 2 hit points per round.

## ZAGUM (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 127 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 85%

TREASURE TYPE: C, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12/3-12/4-16

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (16' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 228

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

Zagum is a duke serving Asmodeus, and commands 30 companies of barbed devils. He is ambitious and cold-blooded, but considers cruelty a self-indulgent waste of time, whereas humor (laughing with fellow

devils) pays dividends in terms of comradeship, mutual aid, respect, and cooperation. Therefore Zagum has a sense of humor, if a coarse one, and is constantly inventing jokes or stunts that amuse rather than harm.

Zagum can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, *hold monster*, *fly*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Twice per day he can cause a *flame strike*, and once per day employ a *symbol of pain*. He causes *fear* by gaze (1" effective range, save vs. spell at -2 to avoid), and can *summon* 1-4 barbed devils (75% chance of success) as desired. Zagum regenerates 2 hit points per round.

*Description:* Zagum appears as a gigantic barbed devil, with a long (15') tail and a jagged row of barbed spines running up his back, culminating in a bony collar edged with spines at the back and sides of his head. His scaled skin is crimson in hue, his eyes yellow with black pupils.

### Spells in the hells

There is much more to be done before the Nine Hells are truly playable. As another step in that direction, the remainder of this presentation is devoted to some suggested spell alterations (that is, differences in the performance of spells on the Prime Material Plane compared to the plane in question), primarily for the plane of Avernus. (*Editor's note: Frank Mentzer, one of the resident rule experts on the AD&D™ game at TSR Hobbies, Inc., responded to our request for additional help by offering some additions and suggested corrections to the author's spell list. We have used [square brackets] to set off Frank's remarks from Ed Greenwood's original material.*)

The defensive strategy of the Nine Hells is to confine all entries to this plane, so that hostile or unauthorized visitors can be dealt with on Avernus and not in the realms of any of the archdevils. If an attacker is strong, the archdevils merely send more and more of their armies (who, given an archdevil's

authorization, can move freely about the hells) to Avernus, into the fray, until the foe is overwhelmed. If this strategy works, further details of the rest of the Nine Hells may never be necessary.

### Magic alterations

The Nine Hells are environments very different from the Prime Material Plane. The archdevils have, over a span of time far beyond man's ken, twisted facets of the nature of the hells to their own ends, resulting in magical conditions forbidding to intruders. As a rule of thumb, spell casters entering the Nine Hells will find that they cannot contact or summon creatures from other planes; cannot control fauna, flora, or weather; and in particular they will face many creatures (the devils) that are immune to the effects of most mind- and control-related spells.

Clerics and druids cannot regain spells above 2nd level, once cast, and the effects of many spells and even magical items are altered. A *protection from devils* scroll, for instance, would be ineffective if read in the hells. [A scroll of *protection from devils* would still have effect, but only that of a "normal" *protection from evil*, 10' radius spell effect. Partial reading gives the -2 penalty to attacks of, and the +2 bonus to the saving throws of the defenders from, the given type of devil (3, 7, or 10 segments to affect lesser, greater, or all devils, respectively). However, contact with any magic-resistant creature might cause the protection to vanish (normal MR check applies).]

Suggested spell alterations are given below, including those for spells published in earlier issues of *Dragon*® magazine, either from E. Gary Gyga's column, *From the Sorcerer's Scroll*, or Len Lakofka's column, *Leomund's Tiny Hut*. Note that new spells published after issue 69 of *Dragon* magazine are unknown to me as of this writing, and hence are not covered. These alterations (and those of magical items and character abilities, detailed hereafter) are of necessity incomplete: few are eager to learn such

alterations the hard way, by experimentation in the hells, and few who do learn return to tell the tale.

Spells are listed by class, and within each character class by ascending level, alphabetically by name within each level. "X" equals "ineffective."

### Cleric spells

*Command:* Ineffective against greater devils.

*Detect evil:* Evil is so overwhelming that this spell can only be used negatively; i.e., to detect the absence of evil in a specific object or creature.

[*Light* and *continual light* spells have areas of effect of half normal size and intensity, and may attract wandering residents of the plane, if any (1 in 6 chance, check per turn).]

*Protection from evil:* X

*Protection from good:* Effects of double strength.

[*Purify food & drink:* X]

*Sanctuary:* Ineffective versus archdevils; other creatures attacking caster gain a +2 bonus on saves vs. spell.

*Chant:* X

*Holy symbol:* Ineffective, and any attempt to cast will draw the nearest devil to the place of casting, quickly.

*Messenger:* X

*Dust devil:* X

*Enthrall:* X

*Prayer:* X

[*Speak with dead:* X]

*Abjure/implore:* Both forms ineffective.

*Ceremony, consecrate ground:* X

*Divination:* X

*Negative plane protection:* X

*Protection from evil*, 10' radius: X [Note that a paladin's radiant *protection* effect (and that of any other creature connected to the Positive Material Plane)



is merely reduced from 10' radius to personal effect only.]

*Protection from good*, 10' radius: Effects of double strength.

*Atonement*: X

*Commune*: X [Commune, aerial servant, conjure animals, and other spells involving direct contact with another plane might work, depending on the power of the being contacted and the actual plane of the Nine Hells on which the spell is cast. If on the outermost (or first, or highest, or closest to the Inner Planes), all such spells will work properly. A demigod can be contacted on the second plane "down"; a lesser god, the third; and a greater god, five planes "down." No contact of any sort can be made from the 6th-9th planes of the Nine Hells unless permission is given from the ruler of the plane.]

*Dispel evil*: X

*Flame strike*: X

*Insect plague*: X

*Quest*: X

*Raise dead*: X

*Aerial servant*: X [See commune.]

*Conjure animals*: X [See commune.]

*Find the path*: X

[Word of recall: Will only work from the 1st-6th planes; the 7th-9th planes are too far removed.]

[Astral spell: Will only work from the 1st of the Nine Hells.]

*Control weather*: X

*Earthquake*: X

*Exaction*: Ineffective versus devils.

[Gate: Affects deities in limited fashion, as per commune (see above).]

*Henley's digit of disruption*: Ineffective, but caster will know this upon thinking of the spell, prior to casting.

*Holy word*: Ineffective. (Unholy word will be effective only if caster worships one of the archdevils, and then only against lesser devils.)

*Resurrection*: X

## Druid spells

*Entangle*: X

*Predict weather*: X

[Purify water: X]

*Heat metal*: Functions normally, but note that devils suffer no damage from the "hot" version and only half damage from the cold version.

[Obscurement: Half normal dimensions, 1/8 normal volume (1/2" cube/level).]

[Call lightning: X]

*Plant growth*: X

*Summon insects*: X

*Animal summoning I*: X

*Call woodland beings*: X

*Hold plant*: Plants native to the hells save vs. the spell at +2.

*Animal growth (or reduction)*: X

*Animal summoning II*: X

*Commune with nature*: X

*Insect plague*: X

*Animal summoning III*: X

*Conjure fire elemental*: X [Conjure elemental (fire or earth) works from Avernus only.]

[Feeblemind: Treat all devils as if human clerics (+1 to save).]

*Weather summoning*: X

*Chariot of Sustarre*: This spell is effective on Avernus, but not when cast on any of the other hells.

*Confusion*: Ineffective versus greater devils; lesser devils save vs. spell at normal, not at -2.

*Conjure earth elemental*: X [But see conjure fire elemental above.]

*Control weather*: X

*Creeping doom*: X

[Finger of death: Ineffective against any devil.]

[Reincarnation: X]

## Magic-user spells

*Cantrips-Bee*: X; *Bug*: X; *Change*: ineffective vs. creatures native to the hells; *Gnats*: X; *Mouse*: X; *Spider*: X; *Yawn*: ineffective vs. creatures native to the hells.

*Find familiar*: Will work only if cast by a lawful evil or neutral evil magic-user; only imps can be summoned in the hells.

[Light and continual light: See note under cleric spells.]

*Melt*: Ice devils are not affected by this spell, suffering no damage.

*Mount*: X

*Precipitation*: X

*Protection from evil*: X

*Protection from good*: Effects will be of double strength.

*Taunt*: X

*Detect evil*: See note under cleric spells.

*Forget*: Ineffective against all devils.

[Invisibility (all sorts): The DM must remember to check each devil's chance of detecting invisibility (as applicable), based on intelligence and hit dice (DMG p. 60). Thus, any form of invisibility is often ineffective against archdevils.]

*Invitation*: ineffective against devils

[Rope trick: The "extra-dimensional space" will be on an adjacent level of the hells, and may invite unexpected visitors (cf. gate).]

*Scare*: X

[*Shatter*: Will not affect a devil's talisman.]

*Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*: Ineffective versus greater devils.

*Cloudburst*: X

*Material*: X

*Monster summoning I*: X

*Protection from evil 10' radius*: X

*Protection from good 10' radius*: Effects will be of double strength.

*Sepia snake sigil*: Will always miss devils of any sort.

*Charm monster*: Ineffective versus greater devils; lesser devils save at +2.

*Fear*: Ineffective versus undead, devils.

*Fire charm*: Ineffective versus greater devils.

*Monster summoning II*: X

*Plant growth*: X

[*Wall of ice*: Duration is but 1 round per level in most warm areas of the hells.]

*Avoidance*: Ineffective versus the apparel or possessions on the person of a devil.

*Conjure elemental*: X [See note under druid spell *conjure fire elemental*.]

*Contact other plane*: Effective only to other planes within the hells. [Ignore the "elemental" line in the spell description, calculating all distances as needed.]

*Dismissal*: Effective in the normal manner, but its reverse, *beckon*, will never succeed in summoning a creature from any plane but one of the other hells.

*Distance distortion*: X

*Dolor*: Ineffective versus devils and other creatures native to the hells. Nothing will happen when it is cast; the target devil will not charm and dominate the caster.

[*Feeblemind*: See note under the druid spell of the same name.]

*Leomund's lamentable belabourment*: Ineffective versus devils.

*Leomund's secret chest*: The chest can be summoned on Avernus, but not on any of the other hells, and in no case will a living creature of any sort enter the hells via such a chest.

*Magic jar*: Ineffective versus greater devils.

*Monster summoning III*: X

[*Wall of iron* or *wall of stone*: These effects have a duration of 1 turn per level of the caster.]

*Control weather*: X

[*Death spell*: Ineffective against any devil.]

*Ensnarement*: X

*Geas*: Ineffective versus devils.

*Invisible stalker*: X [See note under the cleric spell *commune*.]

*Monster summoning IV*: X

[*Reincarnation*: X]

*Spiritwrack*: Only effective versus devils (demons cannot be contacted from the hells), and casting it will attract any greater and archdevils on the plane of casting to the location of the caster, within 1 turn.

*Transmute water to dust*: The waters of marshy areas in the upper hells (e.g., Minauros) will be affected by this spell, but the river Lethe and the waters of the swamp and ocean of Stygia will not.

*Banishment*: Note that a devil cannot be forced "back" to "its own" other plane of the hells; this spell can banish other creatures from the hells, but cannot force creatures native to the hells from one level to another.

*Cacodemon*: X

*Charm plants*: X [Permits communication only, not charm.]

*Limited wish*: Devils are in no way affected by a *limited wish* cast in the hells. Creatures may leave, but not enter or be summoned to, the hells by means of a *limited wish*. Such a spell cannot be used to contact a deity or a deity's servants except an archdevil or servants, nor to gain spells from that deity or servants.

*Monster summoning V*: X

*Teleport without error*: This can be used to enter or leave the hells, but the chance of error in any case rises by 21%.

*Torment*: Any unfortunate spell caster undertaking such a spell will soon learn that, in the hells, no devil can be bound in a magic circle, thaumaturgic triangle, pentagram, or other drawn boundary. (Protective circles will keep some devils at bay, however, and physical barriers or prisons, such as a *forcecage*, can contain most devils.)

*Truename*: It is worth noting with respect to this spell that no archdevil's true name is known to other devils (except perhaps Asmodeus; if this were not so, the devil in question would not retain his or her position for long), and as a rule, only archdevils know the names of other devils (typically only a few loyal to them, for they would act quickly to bring about the downfall of an enemy, by means not available to casters of this spell). Devils do not bargain *with* the true names of other devils, although they may bargain *for* such names. The *sending* portion of the spell will work as a means of delivering willing creatures from the hells to other, safer planes, or as a means of transport within the hells.

[*Vanish*: If the object is of greater bulk than the given limit, the object is not replaced by stone, but is instead entirely unaffected.]

[*Antipathy/sympathy*: Any devil on its home plane is unaffected.]

*Binding*: See *torment*, above.

*Demand*: Ineffective versus devils.

*Mass charm*: Ineffective versus greater devils.

[*Maze*: The "extra-dimensional space" is 3 planes removed at best, and may (depending on the level of the hells on which it is cast) have an effect similar to *rope trick* or *gate*.]

*Monster summoning VI*: X

**Sink:** Greater devils are unaffected by this spell. Other creatures of the hells are allowed the usual saving throw.

**Symbol:** Ineffective versus greater devils.

**[Trap the soul:** Ineffective against archdevils.]

**Energy drain:** Ineffective in the hells. When the spell is called to mind (the concentration just prior to casting begun), the caster will realize that the spell will not work—and if spellcasting is not undertaken, the spell will not be lost.

**Imprisonment:** [Ineffective against archdevils, but will place any other devil into *temporal stasis* until dispelled (and note that a standard magic-resistance check applies).] The reverse of the spell will not cause any creatures to appear.

**Monster summoning VII:** X

**Wish:** See *limited wish*, above; conditions are identical except that a *wish* may affect lesser devils.

## Illusionist spells

**[Hypnotism:** Ineffective against all devils.]

**[Light and continual light:** See note under cleric spells.]

**Spook:** Ineffective on creatures native to the hells.

**[Wall of fog:** Half normal dimensions, 1/8 normal value.]

**Fascinate:** X

**Hypnotic pattern:** Ineffective versus all devils.

**[Invisibility (all forms):** See note under magic-user spells.]

**[Illusionary script:** Ineffective against greater devils.]

**[Paralyzation:** Note that a paralyzed devil can still perform “at will” abilities, including *teleport*.]

**Confusion:** Ineffective vs. greater devils; lesser devils save vs. spell at par, not at -2.

**[Emotion:** Ineffective against greater devils.]

**[Minor creation:** Half normal duration, or 1/10 normal duration when on the 7th–9th planes of the hells.]

**Phantasmal killer:** Ineffective versus greater devils.

**[Shadow monsters:** All have half the given hit points, and inflict half the given damage against victims who make their saving throws, due to the remote position of the hells with respect to the Plane of Shadow.]

**Solid fog:** Does not reduce the movement of creatures native to the hells.

**Chaos:** X

**[Demi-shadow monsters:** See *shadow monsters* above.]

**[Major creation:** Half normal duration, or 1/10 normal duration when on the 7th–9th planes of the hells.]

**Maze:** [See note under magic-user spell of the same name.]

**[Shadow door:** The invisibility is ineffective against archdevils.]

**[Shadow magic:** Victims failing their saving throws take only half normal damage.]

**[Summon shadow:** X]

**Conjure animals:** X

**[Demi-shadow magic:** See *shadow magic* above.]

**[Mass suggestion:** Ineffective against archdevils.]

**[Permanent illusion:** Lasts only 3 minutes after concentration ends.]

**[Shades:** See *shadow monsters* above.]

**Alter reality:** Devils are in no way affected by an *alter reality* cast in the hells; the conditions limiting the spell are identical to those on the magic-user spell *limited wish* (see above).

**[Astral spell:** See note under cleric spell of the same name.]

**Shadow walk:** X

**Vision:** X [Works normally on the first of the Nine Hells.]

**Weird:** Ineffective versus greater devils; lesser devils save at +3; ineffective versus undead.

(Note that in this list, the term “greater devil” includes archdevils unless the two terms are used separately in the same entry.)

[General note on limited and full *wishes*: The ruler of any plane of existence (including the Nine Hells) has full and final “veto power” over any *wish* cast within its/his/her territorial jurisdiction. This power might or might not be exercised with any given *wish*, depending on the nature of the ruler and the *wish*. However, the exceedingly lawful nature of the hells is such that the ruler will immediately know of any and all such attempts, and will immediately (in all but exceptional circumstances) cancel, modify, or grant the effects, quite possibly arriving in person (with all appropriate guards and assistants) to adjudicate the matter.]

## Magic item alterations

**Potion of fire resistance:** Effective against the natural fires of the hells and those magically produced by creatures such as nightmares, up to and including malebranche—but, the potion seems ineffective against the fiery magics of pit fiends and all greater unique devils. (A *ring of fire resistance* seems strong enough to protect against such powerful magical fires.)

**Potion of gaseous form:** An adventurer using such a potion exploded when struck by a firewind, while fleeing across the rifts of Nessus. Companions of the lost one say the firewind appeared drawn to the gas.

**Oil of etherealness:** [No effect.] Ethereal individuals are apparently not invisible in the hells.

**Potion of treasure finding:** Apparently ineffective in palaces and caves of the Nine Hells.

**Ring of djinni summoning:** The djinni will not feel its summons, nor appear, if such a ring is rubbed when in the hells; its operation is suspended.



*Ring of elemental command:* Such a ring is inoperative in the hells, and none of its effects or properties (including saving throw penalties) will be effective.

*Ring of fire resistance:* See *potion of fire resistance*, above.

*Ring of human influence:* All devils, even if in human or humanoid form, are totally unaffected by such a ring.

*Ring of multiple wishes:* Any wishes that affect any greater or archdevil (other than to free the speaker or a stated creature from the physical grasp or confinement of such a being) are beyond the power of the magic of the item. Requests involving exit from the hells will be granted, as will wishes involving travel from place to place within the hells, but such travel will not extend to captive devils or other creatures of lawful evil alignment, and may not operate to the precise destination requested.

*Ring of three wishes:* See *ring of multiple wishes*. For limited wish items, see that spell under the above list of spell alterations.

*Ring of water walking:* This item will operate in the marshes of Minauros and probably elsewhere in the hells as well, but demonstrably does not function with respect to Lethe, the River of Forgetfulness, on Nessus.

*Rod of beguiling:* [Ineffective against all residents on their home planes.]

[*Rod of lordly might:* In the first hell (Avernus), the battle axe effect is +2, the spear +1, and other weapon effects are non-magical. Deductions apply for planes further removed. All mechanical effects work normally.]

*Rod of resurrection:* This item will not function properly in the hells. If its employment is attempted, charges will be drained in the usual manner, but the rod will only *animate dead*—“raising” a mindless, undead zombie which will obey anyone bearing the rod. The zombie is subject to the usual damage and continuing decay while animated, and if removed

from the hells to another plane, will revert to an inanimate, lifeless corpse.

*Rod of rulership:* Such rulership is ineffective against hellcats and all devils.

[*Rod of smiting:* Acts as a +1 weapon in the first hell, and non-magical on planes further removed; however, one charge is still used on a roll of 20, and triple normal damage is still inflicted thereby (if the victim can be damaged by normal weapons).]

*Staff of command:* Ineffective in the hells.

*Staff of the magi:* *Protection from evil* power ineffective, *protection from good* of double strength. *Plane travel* power is unaffected, but *conjure elemental* function will be ineffective. The *retributive strike* power is unaffected, and has operated most efficiently in the hells! [For *staff of the magi* and *staff of power*, see notes on spell alterations for *light*, *invisibility*, etc.]

*Staff of the serpent:* Hell hounds, hellcats, and all devils are immune to the poison of the adder version.

[*Staff of striking:* Acts as a +1 weapon in the first hell, and non-magical on planes further removed; however, charges still double or triple normal damage (if the victim can be damaged by normal weapons).]

*Staff of withering:* Ineffective in the hells (refer to DMG).

*Wand of conjuration:* The *monster summoning* function will be ineffective, but charges will be drained—and lost—in the usual manner when this power is called upon.

*Wand of enemy detection:* Ineffective in the hells.

*Wand of fear:* Ineffective in the hells.

*Wand of magic detection:* Ineffective in the hells.

*Wand of metal and mineral detection:* Ineffective in the hells.

[*Wand of wonder:* No effect if heavy ruin, *summon*, or *create* any creature, plant, or object (rhino, butterfly, grass, et al.) is indicated; only certain spell effects will be produced.]

*Arrow of direction:* Ineffective; it will fall in random directions when used in the hells, although this may not be immediately evident to the user.

*Bag of beans:* The soil and water of the hells cannot cause such beans to sprout. They retain, however, their explosive property.

*Bag of devouring:* A *bag of devouring* will never be found in the hells, and will not enter them; it will disappear (along with any contents) instantaneously if its bearer enters any of the hells.

*Book of exalted deeds:* Cannot be touched by lesser devils, against whom it functions as though it were a *protection from evil* of 20' radius, and if any such approach to 10' distant, they take 2-12 electrical damage (no save), and are *repulsed*. This applies also to non-diabolic creatures of the hells. Greater devils take 1-6 damage per contact, and are (save at +1) *confused* (75%), *slowed* (20%), or both (5%) for 1-4 rounds at every contact with such a book. Archdevils take 2-4 points of damage upon touching such a book, and their touch destroys it.

*Bowl commanding water elementals:* Ineffective in the hells.

*Bowl of watery death:* Will function normally in the hells. A tiny, drowned magic-user will turn into a lemure of normal size if still in the hells after 60 turns have elapsed.

*Brazier commanding fire elementals:* Ineffective in the hells.

*Brazier of sleep smoke:* When a fire is lit in such a brazier when in the hells, clouds of billowing smoke will pour forth, but it has no sleep effects, and no fire elemental will appear. The smoke will dissipate, and the fire go out, in 2-6 rounds.

*Censer controlling air elementals:* Ineffective in the hells.

*Censer of summoning hostile air elementals:* Ineffective in the hells.

*Crystal ball:* If used while in the hells, the chance of locating a subject within the Nine Hells is normal; i.e.

as given in the *DMG* (note that from one level of the hells to another is to another plane, and subject to a -25% penalty). Archdevils will always (100%) feel the view-presence of a scrying entity, knowing its direction and approximate distance after 1-4 rounds of observation, if on the same plane, and knowing the plane after 3-12 continuous rounds of observation if the observer is on another plane. If a crystal ball is employed in the hells to observe things on other planes outside of the hells, there is a penalty of -33% on locating a subject (but only -24% if the subject is on the Prime Material Plane).

*Crystal hypnosis ball:* If a magic-user should employ a ball controlled by an archdevil (and most archdevils place four to twelve or so on the Prime Material Plane to further their own ends and to observe events) while in the hells, the *suggestion* employed immediately will be to travel to (or move toward) the location of (or the plane of) the controlling archdevil. Rarely (and only if the controlled individual's party is strong), the devil may compel the individual to undertake a mission in the hells, typically stealing from or spying on a rival archdevil. If a *crystal hypnosis ball* controlled by a being not in the hells is employed by a magic-user in the hells, nothing will occur; the crystal ball will seem only a non-magical sphere of glassy crystal, although it will still radiate a detectable dweomer.

*Deck of many things:* Plaques drawn in the hells will have normal effects except for the following: *knight* will arrive by means of *plane shift* in 1-3 rounds, bewildered but fully armed and armored, fresh and at full hit points—and will immediately recognize the character he wishes to follow. *Flames* will cause the devil (DM's choice as to identity, but it will be a devil somewhere in the hells at the time the card is drawn) to immediately see the character who has drawn the card, and know the precise location of the character at that time. If *balance* is drawn and the character's new alignment is lawful evil, betrayal of the party in

such a way as to gain the most status for the newly lawful evil character will be the ultimate result.

*Eyes of charming:* Charm powers are not effective versus devils or other monsters; the eyes enable the wearer to *charm person* only.

*Helm of teleportation:* This item will function properly in the hells, but there is a 33% chance that the destination reached will be slightly different than that intended—i.e., a *teleport* into an infernal palace might deposit one outside the gates. Inter-planar travel (i.e. into another level of the hells) is of course not possible. This “shift” phenomenon does not appear to affect the spell *teleport* (but evidence available to date is fragmentary), and in any case the “shift” effect is entirely separate from the vertical-error risk of teleportation.

*Horn of the Tritons:* Ineffective if winded in the hells.

*Horn of Valhalla:* Will be effective if winded in the hells, and any berserkers appearing will fight any devils within view before turning on the horn-blower, if there is any class or alignment conflict. The berserkers will vanish in 6 turns (although few will survive that long if called into direct combat with devils).

*Instrument of the bards:* See *bards* under *character ability alterations*, below.

*Iron flask:* Any devil or rakshasa released from such a flask will immediately know where it is and will seek to summon or attract the attention of infernal aid to defeat the individual releasing it and any companions.

*Pipes of the sewers:* Rats are present in the hells in only two places: the dungeons beneath the iron city of Dis, and in the garbage-choked towers of Malagard. Only when the *pipes* are played in these places will rats appear.

*Robe of eyes:* The tracking ability of such a robe is ineffective in the hells, but otherwise it functions normally.

*Scarab of enraging enemies:* Greater devils and archdevils are immune to the effects of this item.

*Sphere of annihilation:* Such phenomena are never found in the hells, and cannot be magically plane shifted or otherwise made to enter the infernal regions.

*Stone of controlling earth elementals:* Ineffective in the hells.

*Talisman of pure good:* In the hells, this item will not function normally: evil clerics (or evil creatures of any sort) will not be swallowed up in a flaming chasm. Such a *talisman* has a marked effect on all vile creatures in the hells (including devils); the touch of one (“to hit” roll required) will do any such creature 12-48 points of damage (no saving throw), and drain 1 charge. If its charges are exhausted in the hells, such a talisman will darken, shrivel, and crumble.

*Talisman of ultimate evil:* Will function normally in the hells, but will not lose any charges, regardless of the number of uses to which it is put. Devils will not have or know how to use such talismans.

*Trident of fish command:* Any aquatic life to be found in the hells (i.e., in the swamp or ocean of Stygia or the river Lethe) is unaffected by such a trident.

[General note on magic items: For items constructed on the Prime Material Plane, all magic weapon “plusses” are dropped by 2 on the first of the Nine Hells (Avernus), and by 1 more for each plane further removed.]

Note regarding artifacts and relics: All such items function normally in the hells. It is most unlikely that artifacts or relics of any sort will be found in the hells. If there are any such, items dedicated to “good” will not be found among them, and they will lie within the walls of the archdevils’ fortresses—not lost or “forgotten” for a character to happen upon.

## Character ability alterations

### Combat

Note that a +2 (at least) or better magic weapon is required to physically hit any unique devil or arch-devil, including the nobility of hell and the outcast devils. DMs should also remember that fire of any sort has no effect on devils or any other creature native to the hells.

**Archery:** Use of this skill (by any character proficient in it) is impossible on the plane of Dis, save within Dispater's palace itself, or underground (due to the winds), and also impossible in the central rifts of Nessus (due to the firewinds). It can otherwise be exercised normally, although volcanic activity on Phlegethos, and fireball formation on Avernus, may destroy the occasional missile.

**Infravision:** For elves, half-elves, spell casters employing such a spell, and other creatures while in Phlegethos, Malbolge, and Maladomini, there is too much background heat in all surroundings for *infravision* to detect anything more than cold or cool spell effects, objects, etc., (and these soon warm from contact with the surroundings).

### Psionics

Psionic processes function with only minor modifications in the hells. Psionic combat is unaffected.

**Animal telepathy:** All creatures native to the hells are considered "monsters" as far as this ability is concerned.

**Body equilibrium:** Anyone walking upon the water of the river Lethe (or for that matter, the rivers of fire in Phlegethos, or the lake of Cocytus) will be subject to the natural effects described in the text of this article. Note that use of this discipline will not prevent Cocytus from swallowing a psionic character—that action is a physical, attacking action and not a matter of the ice giving way and closing over someone who has fallen.

**Detection of good/evil:** The overwhelming evil of the hells so pervades everything a psionic character concentrates on that good creatures are easier to distinguish (+33% chance), good objects slightly so (+10%), and evil creatures or objects do not betray their potency or power by their auras, nor their precise (lawful, chaotic, neutral) evil alignment.

**Domination:** This ability functions normally in the hells, but archdevils and greater devils are immune.

**ESP:** The thoughts of devils will be meaningless unless the psionic recipient is conversant with Mabrahoring, the language of the hells. The minds of archdevils and greater devils are not "unshielded"; they cannot be "read" by this means.

**Hypnosis:** Devils of all sorts are immune to this mental power.

**Invisibility:** Archdevils have minds of too great power to be affected by psionic *invisibility*, but they will not always immediately realize that the psionic character is invisible to others.

**Molecular agitation:** Devils are immune to both heat and fire damage effects.

**Sensitivity to psychic impressions:** Any psionic character foolish enough to exercise this discipline in the hells will quickly (within 1 round) be overwhelmed by the cumulative violent emotions and horrific visions of the many lemures, tormented souls, and evil deeds done here. The effects are as follows: The psionic must save vs. death magic or be driven insane (melancholia, megalomania, mania, manic-depressive, hallucinatory insanity, homicidal mania, hebephrenia, suicidal mania, or catatonia; see DMG). A psionic character who successfully saves will fall unconscious for 1–2 rounds, and thereafter be confused for 1–4 rounds. (Psionic individuals who are evil by nature save at +2.)

**Mass domination:** Ineffective versus archdevils and greater devils.

**Molecular rearrangement:** Any metals contained in diabolical magic items, such as the fork of

Mephistopheles, will not be affected by this psionic power; nor will its use affect the powers of such items.

**Telepathic projection:** Ineffective versus all devils.

**Teleportation:** There is a 33% chance that an intended destination will not be reached (see *helm of teleporation* under *Magic item alterations*, above). Note that this is different from mis-teleporting (i.e. low or high), which can also occur (normal probabilities and means of psychic prevention prevail).

### Clerics

No cleric, regardless of alignment or deity, can turn away or command into service any devil while in the hells. Undead, etc., will be affected normally.

### Druids

The flora, fauna, and weather of the hells, as mentioned under the list of spell alterations above, are largely immune from magical influence and control. Druid abilities gained at third and seventh levels (refer to the *Players Handbook*) are unaffected.

### Paladins

The *detect evil* ability of this class will prove sensitive enough to distinguish powerfully evil beings and items from the surroundings, although all things native to the hells will display their evil nature to the paladin. Paladins may not affect devils while in the hells (see cleric section, above) although this power versus undead and the like is unaffected. A *warhorse* cannot be called while in the hells, if it is not taken to the hells with the paladin; note that such steeds will be trembling with fear at all times it is in the infernal regions, and if menaced by devils and/or not constantly reassured and commanded to stay close by its master, will bolt in fear (and likely be lost) when faced by the diabolic. A paladin's *protection from evil* does not operate in the hells, except as a white, *continual light*-like radiance enveloping the paladin, retaining only the +2 saving throw bonus.



### Rangers

The tracking ability of rangers is entirely lost while in the hells.

### Thieves

*Hiding in shadows* is normally impossible with respect to devils and other creatures of the hells; for game purposes assume a base penalty of -33% to the chance, further modified by the DM for circumstances. *Climb walls* is often modified in the hells for conditions: smooth iron walls, such as those of the city of Dis and Mephistar, subtract 20% from the ability to successfully climb them; if heavily rusted, the DM may add another -15% penalty to simulate the chance of the entire wall collapsing or breaking away under the weight of the climber. The treacherous alpine and glacial ice of Stygia and Caina subtract 33% from the thief's chance to climb them successfully. A *spider climb* spell employed by a thief or other character will overcome such penalties, and have its normal effect.

### Assassins

Refer to thief functions, above; assassins are subject to the same modifications. A *disguise* in which the assassin appears to be a devil will not fool any devil.

### Monks

Refer to thief functions, above; monks are subject to the same modifications. A *quivering palm* attack cannot affect any devil (and remember, creatures only hit by magical weapons are unaffected).

### Bards

Archdevils and greater devils are immune to the charming (*suggestion*) powers of a bard, even when augmented by a magical *instrument of the bards*. All other properties of bards and bardic instruments will function normally, with the following exceptions for abilities that are ineffective for certain instruments: Fochlucan Bandore, *entangle*; Doss Lute, *hold animal*; Cli Lyre, *control winds*; Anstruth Harp, *weather summoning*; Ollamh Harp, *control weather*.

### Barbarians

The following barbarian skills are affected while in the hells: *tracking* (as with rangers); *animal training* (ineffective versus all animals native to the hells); *outdoor crafts*; and *survival*. The DM should rule carefully on what facets, if any, of outdoor crafts and survival become effective after a month's existence—which is no small feat—in the initially alien environment of the hells.



## HAVOC ORB

*Based on the results of the “You Design the Monster” feature on the D&D website*

*Created by the D&D Community; original stats by Robert Wiese; updated by Scott Fitzgerald Gray*

The havoc orb is an insane embodiment of law from a distant plane, which leads a retinue of destructive fey creatures in an effort to eliminate all chaos from the multiverse—starting with all other living creatures. It resents even the chaos of its fey retinue, but it willingly suffers them until all other chaos is eliminated. At that point, it plans to destroy its minions last of all.

**Drawn to Chaos.** All havoc orbs are created on some distant lawful plane through an unknown process.

Their essence is the very fabric of chaos from Limbo, which is taken and carefully urged into a metastable order. But this metastability causes a havoc orb to go mad when confronted with a disordered reality that it must compute, calculate, and model internally. Some believe that havoc orbs begin existence as lawful neutral creatures on their home plane, whose perfect order is easy for them to understand. But as soon as it experiences any other reality, a havoc orb’s madness twists it to evil.

A havoc orb is attracted to areas of high natural chaos, such as forests, even as it attracts chaos to itself—causing many fey to be enamored of it. The creature perceives an inherent order in water, and so it avoids lakes and seas. Still, a havoc orb can easily adapt to



living underwater, and in rare cases, these creatures can be found beneath the sea with a horde of aquatic fey behind them.

**Phasing Form.** A havoc orb is a creature of chitinous joints and spindles set around a massive, glaring eye. Its long claws change phase as they come into contact with other creatures or matter. The effect is hard to see, with the orb's appendages seeming to ripple and vanish into whatever it is touching. This phasing form also provides an orb with powerful defenses, letting it throw itself into combat with impunity. It harries creatures at range with multiple *eldritch blast* attacks, but its more fearsome assault comes from its phasing claws. When those claws hit, the havoc orb's structure momentarily melds with its target, weakening it in body and spirit.

**Fey Minions.** A havoc orb often travels in the company of fey creatures. Evil fey bent on destruction are easily attracted to the orb's service, including redcaps,\*

quicklings,\* and hags. But even neutral fey such as satyrs, boggles,\* and darklings\* are often swayed by the destructive potential a havoc orb unleashes, and they too can be found in the creature's service. No society of havoc orbs exists, for each is mad in its own unique way. An orb maintains its retinue of fey followers, and that circle functions like any other group of fey. It pays no real attention to its retinue, however, other than to shepherd its fey along and lead them into combat.

A havoc orb has no interest in treasure, but its fey followers are quick to scoop up coins, jewels, and magic left behind in the aftermath of the destruction commanded by their master.

\*From *Volo's Guide to Monsters*.

**Editing, development, and layout for *Dragon+*:**  
Scott Fitzgerald Gray

## HAVOC ORB

*Large aberration, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 20

**Hit Points** 152 (16d10 + 64)

**Speed** 20 ft.

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
15 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	25 (+7)	14 (+2)	22 (+6)

**Saving Throws** Con +9, Int +12, Wis +7, Cha +11

**Skills** Arcana +12, Nature +12, Perception +12, Persuasion +11

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, poison, radiant, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 22

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**Challenge** 15 (13,000 XP)

**Blasphemous Geometry.** The havoc orb's form takes on the appearance of obscene angles and planes when looked at for too long, making it difficult for other creatures to focus on it. Its AC includes its Intelligence modifier.

**Fey Charm.** A supernatural attraction draws fey creatures to the havoc orb. At the DM's determination, such creatures treat the orb as a friendly acquaintance, as if under the effect of a *charm person* spell. A creature not naturally inclined to follow the orb can resist this effect with a DC 20 Charisma saving throw. With a successful save, a creature becomes immune to that havoc orb's Fey Charm.

**Geometric Vision.** The havoc orb's extradimensional nature allows it to see around corners and behind objects, causing its attacks to ignore half cover and three-quarters cover.

**Magic Resistance.** The havoc orb has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Overreaching Enemy.** If an enemy misses the havoc orb with an opportunity attack provoked by the orb's movement, the enemy must succeed on a DC 16 saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Wild Magic Aura.** The havoc orb is a natural conduit for wild magic. Any creature casting a spell of 1st level or higher within

100 feet of the orb must roll a d20. On a roll of 1, roll again on the Wild Magic Surge table (see the "Sorcerer" section in the *Player's Handbook*) to create a magical effect. The magical effect created cannot be affected or augmented by any ability the casting creature has. An effect that normally requires concentration does not require concentration, and lasts for its full duration. A havoc orb's spells are not affected by this feature.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The havoc orb's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *eldritch blast* (4 beams), *suggestion*  
3/day each: *dispel magic*, *phantasmal killer*  
1/day each: *blur*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The havoc orb makes two phasing claws attacks.

**Phasing Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

## REACTIONS

**Deflecting Defense.** If the havoc orb has an enemy within 5 feet of it, it can nullify a weapon attack made against it by another creature by deflecting the attack toward that nearby enemy. The attack is made against the target enemy, and gains a +5 bonus to the attack roll. An enemy's attack cannot be deflected back against itself.

**Magical Mettle (Recharge 6).** If the havoc orb is the subject of a spell attack, it can ignore the effect of that attack.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The havoc orb can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The orb regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Detect.** The havoc orb makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

**Phasing Claws.** The havoc orb makes one phasing claws attack.

**Eldritch Blast (Costs 2 Actions).** The havoc orb uses its *eldritch blast*.



# DISCOVER THE TRUTHS ABOUT THE GREAT CONFLICTS OF THE MULTIVERSE!



LEARN MORE

MORDENKAINEN'S  
TOME OF FOES



## Fiction: Rancor

Dave Gross offers the following tale, featuring one of Beamdog's latest companions in the Baldur's Gate series—the half-orc, Dorn!

Dave Gross

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**W**ith D&D expeditions taking place in Chult these days—carrying with them the campaign's sense of dangerous exploration and pulp adventure—we felt it fitting to present a similarly themed tale. As one of the new companions waiting to be recruited into your party, Dorn Il-Khan appears in Beamdog's *Baldur's Gate: Enhanced Edition*, *Baldur's Gate: Siege of Dragonspear*, and *Baldur's Gate II: Enhanced Edition*. Here now, the previously untold backstory of Dorn's famed magic sword (with homage to a certain cinematic treasure hunter intended)!

As an added bonus, we've worked with the folks at Beamdog to also provide the following fifth edition character sheet for Dorn Il-Khan.

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)



Famine slithered through the ravine of Dorn's gut.

There was no way to fill the hollow ache. Dorn had already gnawed the last of the rat bones to nothing. If not for the slow trickle of moisture slicking the temple walls, he would have died of thirst days ago.

The predicament was Dorn's fault.

He did not blame himself for the cowardice of the bearers. Their legs shook as they approached the forest ruin, but they feared Dorn more than the legend of the sunken temple. Dorn left them trembling outside the haunted place, where they dared not flee lest he catch them. No doubt they had fled at the first sound of collapse, knowing he could not follow.

Neither did Dorn blame himself for Barranca's treachery. After they had triggered the pit trap, the Amnish thief balked at climbing across to join Dorn, who had leaped the gap in the instant it yawned open. The half-orc left Barranca knotting a rope to throw Dorn upon his return from the inner chamber.

Dorn did not blame the long-dead architects of the temple to Bane. They had designed the snares and pitfalls to endure for centuries, to protect the treasure entombed with their fallen champions. Overcoming those traps was a worthy test for one who dared to take the ebon blade.

Dorn had dared.

He first glimpsed the greatsword as he broached the inner chamber alone. Witchlight licked along its black, razor-sharp edges as it hung suspended by a similarly black chain attached to its pommel. A trio of will-o'-wisp danced near its tip fifteen feet above the temple floor. Around the sword loomed six pillars, each carved in the shape of an armored figure, each reaching a black gauntlet toward the glimmering sword, each yearning for the weapon.

Dorn knew that yearning.

He had begun to desire the sword since the moment he first heard rumors of its existence. Skeptical at first, he sought out bards and



sages, demanding more tales of the legendary ebon blade. Distrustful of the sources, he hired a scribe to translate scrolls for him. Suspicious even of that simpering clerk, he forced the man to teach him to read. The task required months of effort and perpetual vigilance lest the coward flee, but it was worthwhile. Depending on others for such a critical task was a vulnerability Dorn could not abide.

With his own eyes, Dorn read how the various tales differed in details, but agreed on one point: he who wielded the ebon blade wielded power.

The thought encouraged Dorn as he stood in the chapel of the blade. Scanning the floor, Dorn knew even without Barranca's counsel that the tiles concealed triggers for deadly traps.

On some were inscribed runes that Dorn did not recognize. A prickling on the nape of his neck made him think they contained magic that would tear him to pieces if he trod upon them.

On other tiles he saw the three-fingered claw of Bane or an image of the dark god's black gauntlet clutching rays of energy. Whether they were a path to power or a ruse to entice tomb robbers to their deaths, Dorn could not divine.

Without setting foot onto its tiled floor, Dorn considered the rest of the room. Discoloration on the walls and the vaulted ceiling hinted at moisture leaking into the subterranean temple. Among the lumps of slime and mushrooms, he discerned crawling insects and worms.

The statues he had at first mistaken for pillars did not actually support the ceiling. Their figures were thin, attenuated, weakened in their effort to strain upward, grasping for the chain holding the ebon blade.

There was a lesson in that, thought Dorn: Those who reach too high become vulnerable to those who come after them.

Dorn knew what to do.

Avoiding the runic tiles, Dorn put his shoulder against one of the statues. He shoved with all his might, but the statue didn't budge.

He shifted position, braced his back against the statue before pushing

against the wall with his legs. He levered all his mass, strained every muscle. His grunt erupted into a furious roar before he surrendered the effort.

As he relaxed, he felt the statue shift a fraction of an inch. However slightly, he had moved it.

The miniscule victory fired his purpose. He unbuckled his weapons and let them fall to the floor. They were useless to him now. Soon he would have the only blade he wanted.

Dorn leaped up, jamming his heels against the wall while thrusting his shoulder against the statue as high as he could reach. He pushed, his height granting him greater leverage. The statue tipped.

He let his body contract as the statue rocked backward. As it tipped back to its limit, he shoved again, tipping the statue closer to the dangling chain. On the third push its fingers brushed the chain and set the ebon blade spinning. On the fifth the hand caught the chain as its shoulder hit the adjacent statue.

Dorn leaped away as the tumbling statues lurched forward one after the other to grasp the chain. Their combined weight ripped the chain's bolts from the ceiling even as statues collapsed in a jagged mass of mutual destruction.

"Thus do rivals perish in feigned unity." The line arose unbidden in his memory, but Dorn could not name the book in which he had read it. Still, its wisdom remained with him, making him stronger.

"What is happening?" Barranca's voice echoed through the ruined halls. So too did the sound of falling stones. "Do you live, Dorn? Do you have the prize?"

Dorn ignored the thief. He reached into the rubble and retrieved the ebon blade. The chain sang as it hissed across the broken stone, still attached to the pommel.

Even with the added weight of the chain, Dorn raised the sword effortlessly. The air hummed as he swung it first in one hand, then in two. With such power in his hands, Dorn imagined that the world trembled to contain him. Then he realized the sound of crumbling

earth was no mere fantasy.

“Hurry! The temple is collapsing!”

Dorn could barely make out Barranca’s words above the rising clatter of falling stones. Gripping the sword in one hand, he looped the chain in the other and ran.

Barranca stood holding the rope on the other side of the pit. His eyes alit with greed as he saw Dorn holding the sword.

“Throw me the sword,” said Barranca. “I will throw you—”

Dorn hurled the blade across the gap, clutching the end of the chain in his other hand. Barranca’s eyes bulged as the ebon blade impaled him to the hilt. The rope fell from his slackened fingers, slipping like a serpent into the chasm.

Dorn whipped the chain to the side, jerking the dying Barranca between the wall and a fallen stone. Dorn tugged the chain, grunting in satisfaction as he felt the body firmly wedged in place.

Wrapping the chain around his arm, Dorn leaped the gap.

He crashed hard against the chasm wall, but he kept his grip on the chain. In the moments it took him to climb up, the sight had left Barranca’s eyes. Dorn shoved a boot against the man’s belly and wrenched the blade free. Its green light had turned blood red. Dorn felt its power flowing into his own body.

The temple shook again, hurling Dorn to the floor and covering him in rubble. He tried to rise, but a terrible weight fell upon him. Dust stung his eyes and smothered his lungs. He struggled and crawled, always keeping his grip on the ebon blade. Soon, even his half-orc vision perceived nothing but darkness. His hands felt nothing but walls and rubble on every side.

He was trapped.



For days Dorn searched in the darkness, but found no way out. He dragged stones from the collapsed passage and rolled them into the



chasm, counting to five before he heard them strike the bottom. He ate rats when he could catch them, centipedes when the rats became too wary to catch, and nothing at all when he had exterminated the insects.

He bloodied his hands upon the rubble, stanching by scooping handfuls of earth over his wounds, and fell asleep where he exhausted his strength digging. At first he took pains to eliminate his own waste down the crevasse. Later he reserved the effort for digging, and the stench of his own body grew overpowering even to his nose.

Sometimes he awoke to the pangs of hunger. Sometimes a distant light reflected high upon the walls, but he could not discern its source. Perhaps the will-o'-wisps drew near to devour the last of his life.

One day—how many had passed since the collapse, he could not say—Dorn woke to the sound of scrabbling claws. His stomach growled so fiercely that he imagined the sound would frighten off the careless rat. Too weak to stand, he crawled as quietly as he could toward the sound.

It came from the collapsed passage. A few pebbles skipped down the crumbling slope, blocking the entrance passage. Dorn pressed his hands upon the heap, feeling the vibration of the burrowing intruder. He stepped back and listened as the scratching neared the surface. It took all his will not to reach for it when he heard earth spilling out of the tiny passage. He could not afford to lose his meal to impatience.

Before he could decide when to pounce, two astonishing things happened.

A flicker of torchlight appeared behind the opening burrow. Blinking, Dorn saw not the snout of a rodent but a trio of straining appendages.

Human fingers.

“I feel an opening!” a man called from the other side.

Dorn’s hand found the grip of the ebon blade. He was careful not to give away his presence by scraping the chain across the floor.

The hand thrust farther out of the rubble, blocking the light behind it.

“It’s a whole room.” The man coughed. “I think I can push through.”

The hand became a forearm pushing aside more earth and rubble. Dorn resisted the urge to help. He rose slowly, his back against the wall.

An arm squirmed through the hole, followed by a shoulder and a head. The man pushed further, widening the hole enough to slip his entire body through.

Before he could do so, Dorn grabbed his wrist and pulled. The man unleashed a startled cry. “No need for that, my dear fellow— Mysterious Mask, what is that dreadful stench?! Tell me it isn’t you—”

The man gulped as Dorn pressed the edge of the ebon blade against his throat. Dorn tried to speak, but he could barely wheeze.

“Have your minions clear the way, Kryll,” said another man’s voice from outside.

The sound of excavation resumed, harsher and louder than before. Skeletal fingers reached into the opening and scraped back furrows of earth.

Soon Dorn saw the animated dead laboring under the direction of a white-haired woman. Her red lips formed a cruel snarl as she saw him holding his captive. She turned toward the source of the second man’s voice. “Shall I shrivel him, Simmeon?”

“My friends won’t be pleased if you kill me,” said the man in Dorn’s grip. Despite his jaunty tone, Dorn heard the fear in his voice.

“Besides, we didn’t come here to hurt you.”

“What did you come here for?” Long disused, Dorn’s voice had withered to a rasp. “The sword is mine.”

Another man stepped in front of the necromancer, doubtless the one this Kryll had called Simmeon. Perhaps fifty years old, his hard face showed no sign of decrepitude despite his gray hair. The way he moved in his heavy plate armor, Dorn suspected he would be a formidable opponent. The runed longsword in his grip only heightened that impression, but he held it lightly at his side.

Dorn barely spared a glance for the second woman who joined Simmeon. She held her chin high, looking down a long nose toward Dorn before flinching at the smell. Judging from the thunderbolt on her breastplate, she was a priest of Talos, god of storms and destruction.

“Are you the man known as Dorn Il-Khan?” said Simmeon.

Surprised to hear his name, Dorn nodded. He clutched the grip of the ebon sword tightly, unwilling to surrender its power even for succor.

“Rest easy, Dorn Il-Khan. The treasure we seek is not that mighty sword,” he said, sheathing his own blade. “The treasure we seek is you.”

Recruit Dorn in Beamdog’s *Baldur’s Gate: Enhanced Edition*, *Baldur’s Gate: Siege of Dragonspear*, and *Baldur’s Gate II: Enhanced Edition*. Also look for *Neverwinter Nights: Enhanced Edition*, coming soon (but available now on the [Head Start program](#)).

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# D&D BEYOND

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CLASS & LEVEL

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EXPERIENCE POINTS

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DEXTERITY

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CHARISMA

INSPIRATION

PROFICIENCY BONUS

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- ☐ \_\_\_ Dexterity
- ☐ \_\_\_ Constitution
- ☐ \_\_\_ Intelligence
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SAVING THROWS

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SPELLCASTING  
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CANTRIPS

3

6

SPELL  
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SLOTS TOTAL

SLOTS EXPENDED

1

PREPARED

SPELL NAME

4

7

8

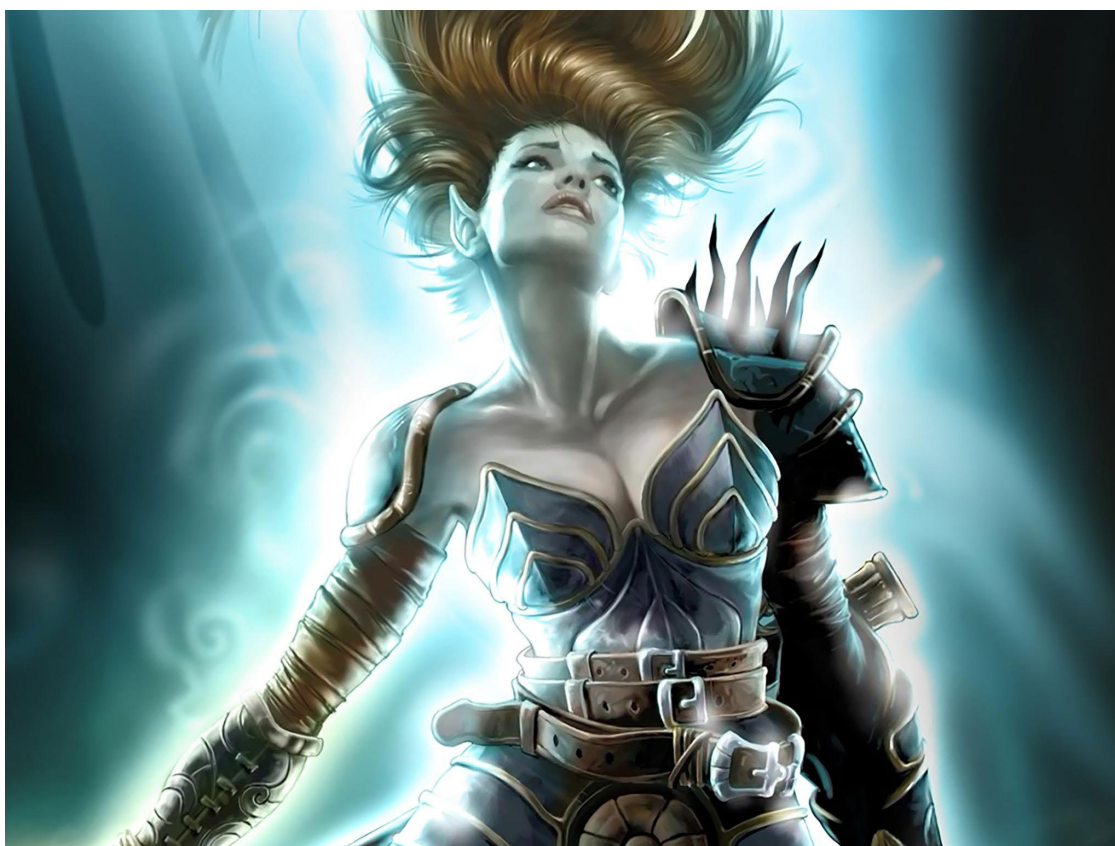
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SPELLS KNOWN





## Doing It For The Fans

We chat with Beamdog's Jonathan Hill and Trent Oster about vibrant communities and modern-day mods.

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**N**ostalgia is a powerful force. Whether it's Hollywood, Broadway or television, looking back for inspiration can turn much-loved properties into modern classics. Beamdog has mastered this skill with gusto, releasing updated versions of fan-favorite video games including *Baldur's Gate* and *Planescape*. Yet for the upcoming release of *Neverwinter Nights: Enhanced Edition*, the team wasn't happy with simple nostalgia. Thanks to their efforts, fans of online RPGs are about to enter a whole new realm of digital storytelling.

*"Neverwinter Nights: Enhanced Edition isn't just a game,"* insists Beamdog Project Director Jonathan Hill. *"It's a platform, a toolset, the rules; it's so much more. We're removing the AI part and putting*

a real human being in there that can control the gaming experience, just like you could on a tabletop adventure. That is one of the things that *Neverwinter* as a platform does more than any game possibly could.”

“I look at something like *Baldur’s Gate* as a beautifully told story. But it’s the story of you as a single player. Even on multiplayer, you’re still very much wrapped up in the ‘Chosen One’ storyline; you don’t have a lot of input. Whereas in *Neverwinter Nights* the party was always the hero. Not just one player, but the entire group. That’s what drove all of our creative decisions.”

“It was really inspired more by pen and paper D&D,” explains Beamdog Founder and CEO Trent Oster. “It’s that small-scale, party-based adventuring that we targeted; a few friends with a module, a DM and a map who have a lot of fun together.”

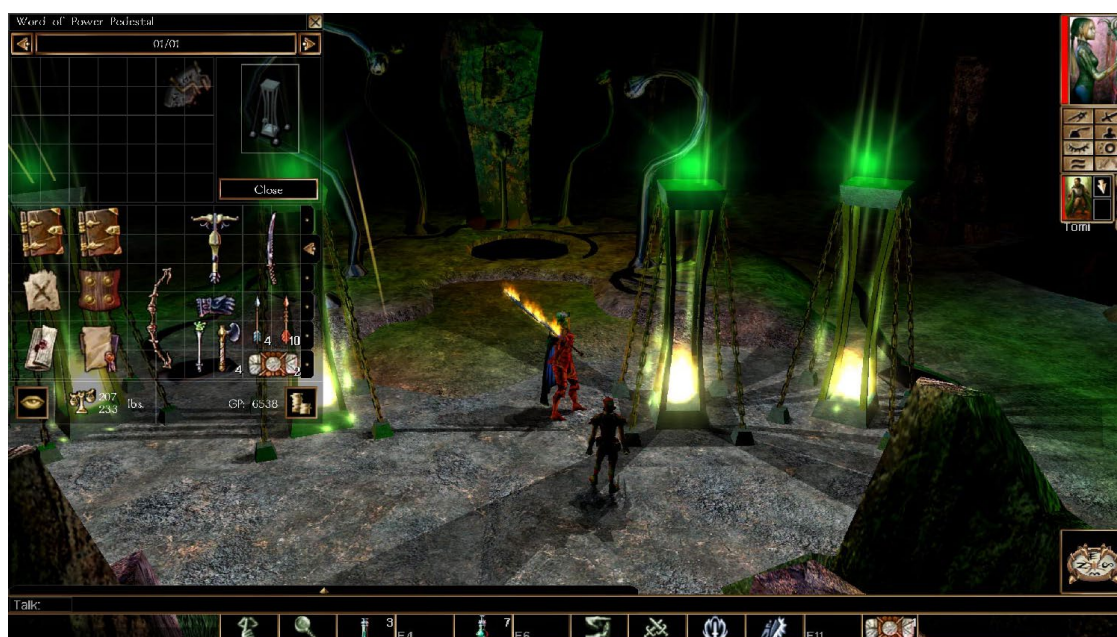


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Oster is a man who has spent a long time in the Forgotten Realms — 20 years to be precise — having project directed the 2002 release of *Neverwinter Nights* at BioWare. As such, he has an intimate knowledge of the game, the world and the community which has grown up around it. But with the original game using third edition rules as the rest of the world has moved into fifth edition, which set will players experience in *NWN: EE*?

“*Neverwinter Nights* launched with third edition rules, so we’re trying to preserve what it was,” says Oster. “At the same time, we’re

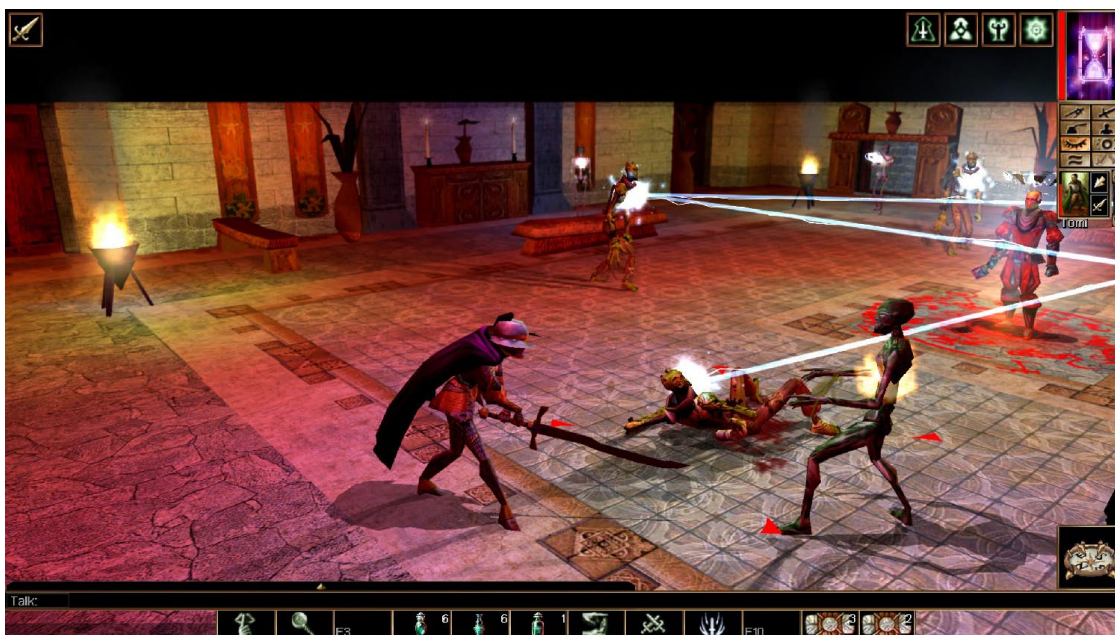


working with the community to open up how hard-coded the rules were, as some of the fans were able to go in and extend the rules out and do some 3.5E rule implementation. But there was a level of hard coding in there that would stump them after a while. One of the things we're trying to do is enable a lot more of that opening up and allowing people to make new versions of it.

“I think we'll always view *Neverwinter Nights* through the lens of a third edition Dungeons & Dragons game. But going forward, if we do it right, there will be nothing to stop persistent world or module creators from trying to customize and extend the rule set, or open it up to a fifth edition implementation.”

And it seems that's just the beginning. The team is adamant that this edition will be less about one specific story and more about handing players—and their DMs—the creative keys to write their own adventures.

“The way I've always looked at it, *Neverwinter Nights* is the original *Minecraft*,” declares Hill. “When it was released, it enabled the users to create content. One of the things we're doing with the *Enhanced Edition* is unshackling some of those limitations and unlocking a lot of the potential, so the end users can make more games and tell their stories.”



(Select to view)

“*Neverwinter Nights* was always about the philosophy of ‘When I

play D&D I don't run the party, I run my character," agrees Oster. "The *Enhanced Edition* is really taking the original game that BioWare shipped and expanding its capabilities. When you go and play on a big, commercial MMORPG, they can only build certain content and only cater to a certain group within the market, whereas with *Neverwinter Nights* it was always this idea of you getting to design your own—like getting to run your own pocket MMO.

"What you choose to design can be the weirdest stuff in the world, but as long as you and your group of people are interested in it, you can make the ultimate game for that group. You've got the freedom to go in and make something new. Even before the *Enhanced Edition* was announced, the *Neverwinter Nights* modding community had gone as far as developing a modern implementation of the rules so you could have guns and grenades; they built art models where characters looked like soldiers. There was just a crazy number of mods out there."

## DEMOCRATIC GAME DEVELOPMENT

The community of still-passionate players soon became more valuable than the team could ever have dreamed. Despite a 15-year gap between the last *Neverwinter Nights* incarnation, fan love for the game has never flagged, surviving and flourishing on online forums. These provided a veritable goldmine for the developers when it came to creative decisions.



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“We’ve inherited an incredible community”, says Hill. “They’re giving us a lot of the feedback that is validating our design choices and it makes me really happy that we’re doing the right thing by them.

“We have an advisory council,” he explains proudly. “People from the community who have been active for the past 15 years. These people have been living and breathing *Neverwinter* as part of their pastime and their lives, and we’ve engaged them to help direct us in order to make the best community project that we can. In normal game development, you come up with an idea and then go hide in a corner while you implement it, and then two years later you discuss it and kick it out. Here, we’re able to know where people would like to see it go. And that community is a huge, vibrant group.”

A democratic approach to game development sprung up at Beamdog, based not on abstract ideas but on real-time communication with the future customer base, who were only too happy to provide their insight and opinion. Some of those community members were even brought on as staff for the Beamdog team.

“I tracked down most of the *Neverwinter Nights* modders that were leading the community at the time through the original BioWare forums,” says Oster. “We basically got the heart and soul of the people who were doing big things on the modding side. We really wanted to engage with them; bring them on and have discussions about what we were trying to do.

“We actually set up **a public Trello for *Neverwinter Nights*** input, where people can go and upvote concepts of different features. If it gets enough upvotes and the consensus around it is good, then we’ll try to put it into development.”

“These are the best people in the world to know how to make this game better moving forward. We figured we could try to guess what everybody wants, or we could just ask them!” laughs Oster.

“Everyone here at the office loves *Neverwinter Nights*,” says Hill. “If we magnify that out to the community, everyone has a different agenda for what *Neverwinter Nights* could be, so we want as much input as possible. It’s about enabling the community more than



anything.”

## A TALE OF TWO CITIES

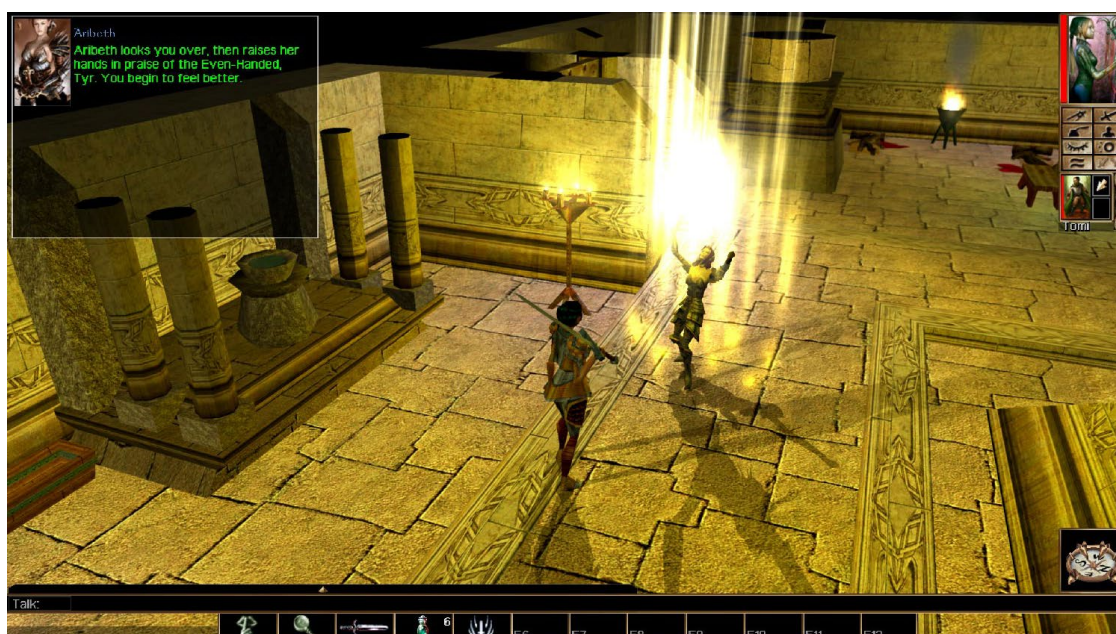
Throughout the course of the game, players have the chance to explore two very different points on the Sword Coast, as they visit the cities of Neverwinter and Luskan. Neverwinter is the “Jewel of the North”, a bustling metropolis and cultural hub with an emphasis on order and a populace known for upholding the law. Luskan is a port-side town, flung out on the North’s last edge of civilization, and a favorite haunt for thieves, pirates and others with a disreputable interest in gold. The two couldn’t be more different, so which would the Beamdog developers rather explore?

“I think that Luskan has always been this dark twin to Neverwinter and there’s a relationship between the two,” muses Oster. “To me, Neverwinter always felt like Vancouver, based around a northern Pacific forest. North enough to be wintry but it’s coastal so it stays warm. I really love the setting.

“I think Neverwinter has always been more the good city, and Luskan the evil city. From the point of view of waking up in the morning and knowing you’re not going to get killed, I’d probably choose Neverwinter. But from a land of opportunity standpoint, Luskan is very appealing.”



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“I’m straight up Luskan,” declares Hill. “I always play a rogue character, and there’s a lot of opportunity in Luskan. “But within the Forgotten Realms, the lore is so rich. Depending which book you’ve read, everyone has their own personal story of where they want to travel. And that’s one of the things that *Neverwinter Nights: Enhanced Edition* allows us to do. With our toolset, people can build their own towns, cities or caves and we’re enabling people to tell stories, which is ultimately the coolest thing on the planet.”

## WORLDS OF CHOICE



While nostalgia has played a big role in modern mainstream storytelling, modern fantasy has taken a step away from classic tales of good vs evil. The dark lords and chosen heroes have departed in favor of gritty realism and characters who borrow from both archetypes. As the team has been keeping one eye on how fantasy has been portrayed in the mainstream, it's interesting to discover if this trend will be reflected in *NWN: EE*.

“The mass market being exposed to something like *Game of Thrones* is a great example of the fact that this is a harsh and brutal world with some interesting people. Nobody is just evil for evil's sake, people have reasons, motivations and justifications for why they are what they are. I think it's really about taking fantasy and giving it a more mature spin.

“And that's what's been so great about working on *Neverwinter Nights*. We've made this toolset where you can play your game, or run your own adventure, and you can skew it in any direction you want to go. If you want a *Ravenloft* campaign that's total gothic horror, you can go there. This game is D&D in a box and you can build the game you've always wanted to play.”

“Dungeons & Dragons is a concept, at least from a rules standpoint,” adds Hill. “This is a framework for you and your friends to tell your own stories. *Neverwinter Nights: Enhanced Edition* is as close to those source books as you can get from a game perspective. You can make your stories as light or dark as you like. The ultimate choice is made by the end user and the people that they play with.”

## MOVING FORWARD

Even as the team powers ahead with new technological innovations to make the game they—and the fans—have always wanted, there remains a deep respect and reverence for the original.

“When we looked at *Neverwinter*, one of our rules is ‘don't just change it’,” explains Oster. “Don't go back and try to revise history. There's a lot of people who still play this and a lot of people who enjoy it. We want to preserve everything, and so we built ourselves four big principles:

1. Don't break backwards compatibility. Let people's content from



*Neverwinter Nights* work in the *Enhanced Edition*. If they created an adventure, they should be able to load it up and it should work flawlessly.

2. Don't change just to change. We're not going to revise rules; you, the players, are going to open them up. Like the parry skill—we're not changing the rules about parrying, we're allowing customization so it plays how people want it to on their server. We stuck to the principle that the people creating their own worlds have a better idea of what they want than we do.
3. Step it forward slowly. Don't throw in big features and break a bunch of stuff. Put small features in and if we do need to add a bigger one, take the time to make sure it's solid before we release it.
4. New content is king. We really want to make new adventures and settings within the *NWN: EE* framework, because that's where we think we can step it forward and create all this new potential.

"We're very respectful of the content that was *Neverwinter Nights*," agrees Hill. "We're enshrining it for what it was. We all have quibbles with it. Some of the artwork is very inspired by the '90s and now we're 20 years on, so art and sensibilities have changed a bit. But we're not going to change the existing art, we're going to create new content as the product moves forward. *Neverwinter* has survived for the past 15 years and people still love it, but we want to add more content beyond that which doesn't break the original."

With so much work going into the *Enhanced Edition*, which aspect of the revitalized *Neverwinter Nights* is Beamdog most proud of?

"The thing I'm most proud of is the fact that we opened it up really early, directly interacting with the community. As professional game developers, we had ideas of where we wanted to go and what should happen, but we listened to our fans first," says Oster. "Our high-level plan was revised based on their feedback for the best way to spend our resources. We turned to the community and said: 'What do you guys want?'"



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“*Neverwinter Nights* means so much to so many different people,” says Hill. “There’s no real way of saying ‘this is the core experience’. So the more that we hear, the more likely we can open up this toolset so they can tell their stories.

“Nobody else has made a game where you can run your own persistent world or your own adventure, and then jump into the DM client and interact with your own players live. In this ‘superpowered mode,’ you can possess creatures, you can jump in as an NPC, you can trigger scripts or change what’s going on in the world. There are so many tools that come together for interactive storytelling that don’t exist in any other means. And we’re going to carry that forward and make it feel as amazing as it can. *Neverwinter Nights: Enhanced Edition* is so much more powerful in terms of what it could do.”

“It was the community that picked it up and carried it forward in the intervening years,” insists Oster. “With us going through and un-hardcoding for the *Enhanced Edition*, there’s going to be so much potential and possibility. I hope that, even after another 15 years, we all still love it.”

**Neverwinter Nights: Enhanced Edition** is out now for PC, Mac and Linux.

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## Neverwinter Goes TRPG

Pit your table top characters against the Crypts of Kelemvor quest from the Neverwinter MMORPG!

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**T**he venn diagram of gaming audiences shares a lot more common ground than might be expected. We are more alike than different.

“Cryptic has a dedicated game room where you can always find employees running and playing pen and paper and table top games at lunch and after work. Several of us have designed them. When we create content for *Neverwinter*, we are always thinking of the tabletop experience—influenced by Wizards of the Coast’s modules,” reveals *Neverwinter* Lead Designer Thomas Foss.

As part of our crossover theme this issue, his team has taken the

MMORPG quest *Crypts of Kelemvor*, which has always been well-received online, and turned it into a module you can enjoy with your tabletop characters.



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“*Crypts of Kelemvor* is one of the first instanced quests in *Neverwinter* where players get a real dungeon-delving feel, complete with traps, puzzles and—of course—lots of monsters. It is designed so that players have agency and choice on how they clear rooms and advance.

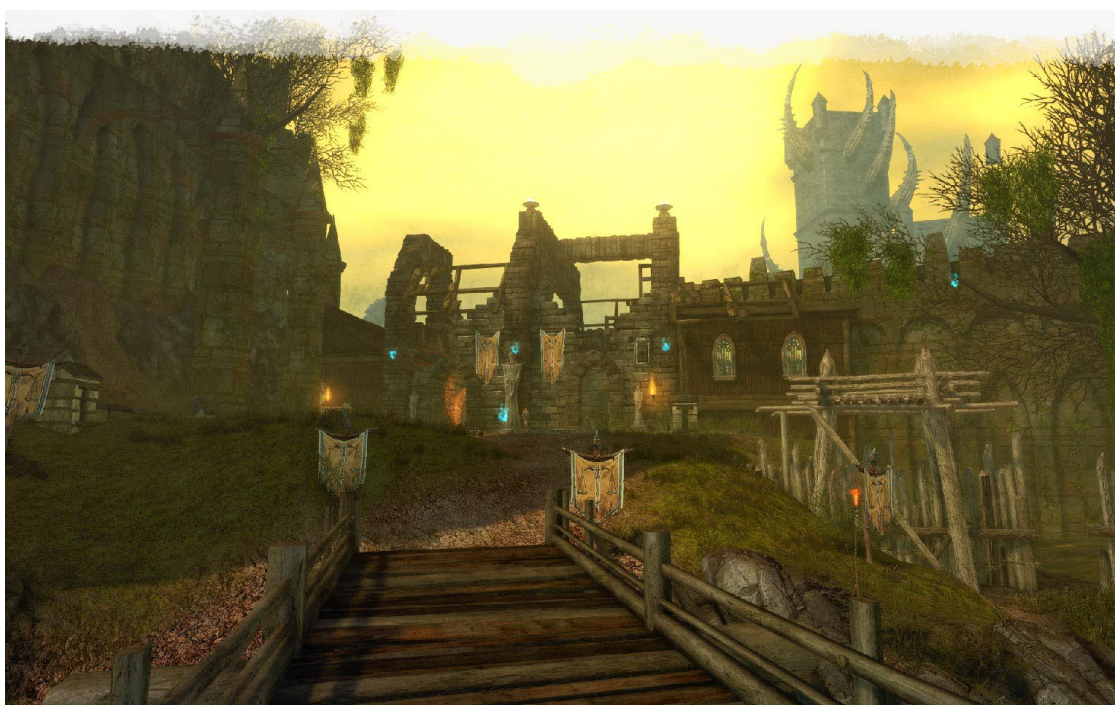
“The twist is that the amount of encounters and rooms you can go through in an MMO is much faster than tabletop. This was actually one of the biggest challenges in creating the tabletop scenario—back-fitting it. That being said, there are a lot of zombies in the crypt, more than the usual tabletop dungeon delver would see. But if they play it clever and remember the tools they are given, they should have no troubles. Dice gods willing, of course.”

The designers may have kept tabletop concerns in mind when creating a quest for the online game but Foss says a lot was “tuned for translation” to create this module.

“In *Neverwinter*, players can slay lots of critters much faster than you would on tabletop, so that number was tuned. The end boss was also taken down a bit and made more relevant to the level of players for



tabletop scenarios. Likewise the loot.



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“The rewards for this quest in *Neverwinter* did not exactly line up for a tabletop experience, so I worked with the *Dragon+* staff, in particular editor Scott Fitzgerald Gray. Scott not only helped me with the loot choices, but overall took my scribblings and turned them into a cool scenario! It was a great collaboration, and I hope to do more in the future.”

Loot isn’t the only thing that needed to be translated. The quest sees players tracking down broken seals that need to be repaired, in order to hold back the undead. In the MMORPG version of *Crypts of Kelemvor*, players click on the seals to collect them and are vulnerable for the three seconds that takes. In the table top conversion, players must carry a number of them as they are found, at a weight of 4lbs each. “Four pounds does seem like a lot, but that’s about the weight of a decent long sword. This is why you need a good team to share the burden; somebody carries the seals, you carry the loot,” Foss advises.

**Crypts of Kelemvor is a one-shot module for players of levels 3-5.**

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# THE CRYPTS OF KELEMVOR

BY THOMAS FOSS AND SCOTT FITZGERALD GRAY

## INTRODUCTION

“The Crypts of Kelemvor” is a one-shot DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure for characters of levels 3 to 5, adapted from a quest in Neverwinter online. This scenario sees the adventuring party given an important quest to collect a number of broken magical seals and to light a number of magical braziers, all of which once protected the crypts of Kelemvor. In so doing, they can help to quell a devastating uprising of undead—organized by a powerful lich named Idris bent on destroying the city of Neverwinter.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

This is a classic dungeon delve, but with a number of MMORPG twists. The characters are tasked with finding and collecting items, but must also “click” parts of the environment as they explore—the braziers whose magical light is anathema to undead. In addition to the normal tricks the adventurers can use as they face off against the undead of the crypts, the light of the sacred braziers can be used as a weapon. Additionally, the end of the scenario gives the characters a chance to interact with another adventuring party—a band known as the Grave Robbers.

**Sacred Braziers of Balance.** When one of these magical braziers is lit, its fire bursts forth in a bright blue

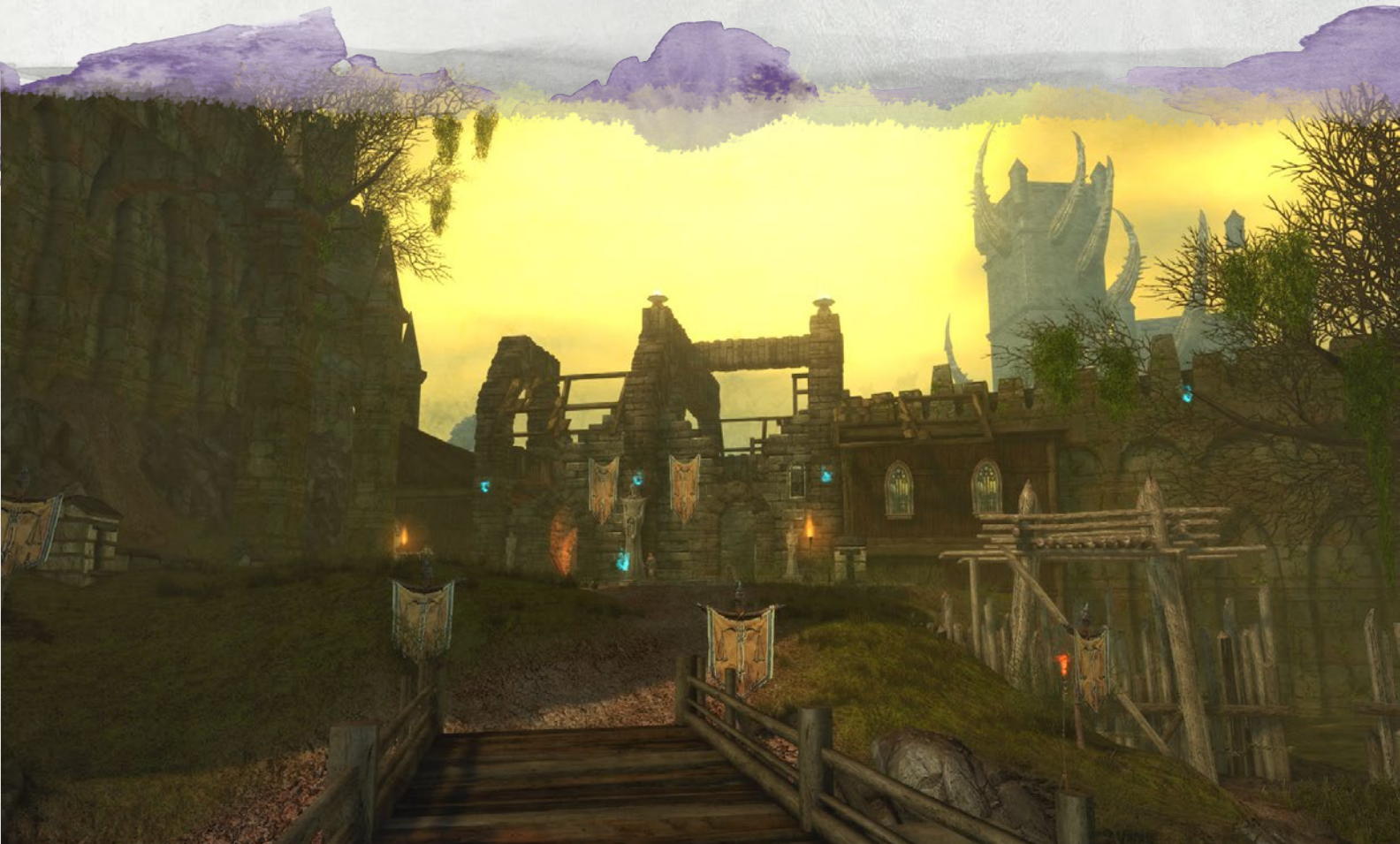
flame that fills a 25-foot-radius area with bright blue-white light. For the first 3 rounds after a brazier is lit, any undead creature that starts its turn within the brazier’s light takes 16 (3d10) radiant damage—presenting a significant threat to such creatures. The length of time it takes to light the braziers is the wild card. A character adjacent to a brazier must use an action to light it, but doing so requires a special striking rod and stone, as well as a successful DC 12 Dexterity check.

**The Grave Robbers.** Before the main boss fight at the end of the scenario, the characters come across an adventuring party known as the Grave Robbers. Three of that party’s original four members face off against the characters (with their cleric having been found eaten in an earlier part of the dungeon). You can play the Grave Robbers as greedy and spoiling for a fight, or you can portray them as pragmatic and willing to work with the characters to complete their exploration of the dungeon.

**Monsters.** Statistics blocks for the undead and other monsters of the crypts appear in an appendix at the end of the adventure.

## EBON DOWNS

Deep in the Silverwisp Swamp off the southern High Road lie the burial grounds known as Ebon Downs. Here, many generations of local folk have been laid to rest, interred within barrows, crypts, and tombs.







The villagers of Grimhollow have watched over these grounds for many years, with each generation passing on the duties to their children. Under their watchful eyes, the Ebon Downs have seen peace.

But one night, that peace was shattered forever. Whether due to a lapse in Grimhollow's vigil or some unknown power, the dead rose in force from the burial grounds and attacked the village, overwhelming its citizens. Those few lucky enough to escape spoke of a dark magic that caused those killed in the attack to rise as undead almost as soon as the life had left their bodies.

The only thing left standing as a beacon of hope in Ebon Downs is the rundown fortress-temple of Kelemvor—a literal wall dividing the now-swamp-encroached village from the great barrows and the graveyard. Here, the priests of Kelemvor still inter the dead, making sure they don't rise. The doomguides, clerics, and paladins dedicated to the god of the dead have pledged their lives in restoring the balance of Ebon Downs. But they are fewer and fewer every day, and have begun to call out across Faerûn for help.

## ADVENTURE HOOK

If you want to play "The Crypts of Kelemvor" as a side trek in a larger adventure, you can look for ways to tie the quest into that adventure. Whatever way you customize it, the characters are approached by an acolyte of Kelemvor petitioning for aid to the temple. A token payment of 20 gp is offered, in addition to free travel and food—and the promise of burial if things go badly. But of more interest to adventurers is the acolyte's promise that any gems, magic, or other wealth found within the crypts can be kept, since the dead no longer need such things.

## SEALING THE CRYPTS OF KELEMVOR

When the players are ready to begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following.

As you enter what is left of the rundown temple of Kelemvor, you feel a strange wave of warmth pass through your body.

Any cleric or paladin in the party will recognize that the characters have just passed through a protective ward of some kind.

The temple is small, and is missing part of its roof and one wall. A priest of Kelemvor tiredly stands watch, looking out over the barrows beyond, and an armored cleric stands in the center of the area next to a campfire. The cleric looks forlorn until he sees you, at which point his smile brightens and he beckons you over to him. He introduces himself as Doomguide Soulhearth—the one who sent out the request for aid.

Soulhearth is not the most talkative person, and he gets straight to the point. "This temple of Kelemvor, our fortress, is our stronghold against the lich Idris and its army of undead. But it is not as secure as it should be. Grave robbers have broken into the crypts beneath the temple, and have broken several of the mystical seals that ensure those who are buried there remain at rest.

"I need you to enter the crypt, relight the sacred braziers that will destroy the undead, and bring back the broken seals. I can then repair them, while the holy fires from the braziers will keep any more undead from entering the crypt."

By accepting Doomguide Soulhearth's quest, the characters will help resanctify the crypts beneath the shrine of Kelemvor. Their goal is to collect all the broken seals and to relight all the braziers found in the crypts.







## FEATURES OF THE CRYPTS

The crypts of Kelemvor are on three levels, broken out into separate chambers and hallways. All levels are connected by stairs, and the areas of each level are separated by portcullis gates and stone doors.

The key objects in the crypts are the statues of Kelemvor that once held the magic seals (currently broken), the *braziers of balance*, and lots of sarcophagi.

**Broken Seals.** Each of the broken seals that the characters must collect is a piece of carved marble scribed with the symbol of Kelemvor, and weighing about 4 pounds. All the seals were once held by statues of Kelemvor scattered around the crypts.

**Doors and Gates.** The areas of the crypts are separated by either iron portcullis gates or stone doors. The portcullis gates allow characters to see through them into the areas beyond. Most doors and gates are opened magically using levers on the “front side” of the door, closest to the entrance to the dungeon. This design was intended to allow areas of the crypts to be closed off from the outside if needed.

Pulling a lever to raise or lower a door or gate is an action. Once open, a door or gate stays open until

the lever is pulled again, or unless a door closes automatically as a security measure. If the characters are worried about someone closing the doors behind them, an open door can be held open by wedging a spike or similar object between it and the adjacent wall with a successful DC 12 Strength check. Unless otherwise noted, a door that has been closed can be forced open manually with a DC 25 Strength check, or can be opened with a *knock* spell or similar magic.

All portcullis gates in the crypts creak and grind loudly when raised. The stone doors open with a loud scraping sound.

**Ceilings.** Unless otherwise indicated, corridors and rooms in the crypts have ten-foot-high ceilings.

**Light.** Many of the areas on the first level are lit by magical torches imbued with *continual flame*. In other areas (including both the lower levels), there is no light except what the characters bring with them.

**Sarcophagi.** Numerous stone sarcophagi are set throughout the crypts. Unless otherwise indicated, all are closed. Any closed sarcophagus can be opened with a successful DC 20 Strength check, but contains only moldering bones.



## AREA 1: ENTRY CHAMBER

When the characters enter the crypts, read or paraphrase the following.

A steep set of stairs leads sixty feet down to the east of the temple, to a wooden door where a Kelemvorite priest waits. He unlocks the door and beckons you through, handing over a small candle lantern, a heavy striking stone, and a steel rod the size of a large dagger. "Only the spark of this rod and stone can light the *braziers of balance*," he says dutifully. "May Kelemvor and Selûne protect you."

The door shuts loudly behind you as the last of your group passes through it, and the sound of the lock being turned on the other side is ominous. You stand in a short hallway. To the south, a thick metal portcullis gate is rusted shut, showing only a dark corridor beyond. To the north, the hallway opens up into a small room.

A burned-down campfire on the east side of the room suggests that this area was once a guard post of some sort. Next to the fire is a cloth knapsack that holds treasure left behind by a priest who once stood guard here.

A large stone door with no handles stands to the north, with a large brass lever on the wall beside it. When the lever is pulled, a disturbingly loud scraping sound rings out. Dust billows as the thick stone door slides upward, revealing the area beyond. A magical torch around the corner of the hallway lights the way forward.

### TREASURE

Within the knapsack, the characters find a *potion of healing* that has the scent of brandy.

## AREA 2: CENTRAL INTERSECTION

Two doors and an open corridor give the characters a choice of directions from this area.

Two doors stand ahead of you—a metal portcullis gate to the west, and a stone door straight ahead to the north. Looking through the portcullis, another corridor extends some twenty feet before making a T-intersection. A brass lever stands beside the portcullis on the west wall.

Where the passageway opens up to the east, it reveals both a larger room ahead and a statue of the god Kelemvor, its hands open as if it were holding something. A piece of carved marble sits on the floor at the statue's feet. Opposite the statue is a small alcove set with a pile of humanoid bones.

Pulling the lever raises the creaking portcullis, but there is no sign of a mechanism for the stone door. No action or magic available to the characters can open the door, and any ability checks made to search or open it result in failure. (This door opens automatically after the characters turn a special key in area 8.)

The bones are the remnants of undead skeletons destroyed by the Grave Robbers when they recently passed this way.

**Broken Seal.** The piece of carved marble at the feet of the statue is the first of the crypt's broken seals.

## AREA 3: MAIN CRYPT

This huge chamber is supported by arched pillars, and features a ceiling ten feet high. Three ornate sarcophagi stand along the far wall, one of which has had its lid removed. Two torches along the side walls fill the room with magical light, revealing open doors along the north and south walls.

In the center of the room, a waist-high marble brazier is carved with the symbol of Kelemvor—and has a mutilated body sprawled before it. Wood is stacked and ready for lighting within the brazier, suggesting that the body might have been an acolyte attempting to light it. A scroll lies on the floor next to the body.

With a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check, a character notices crouched figures lying in wait within the shadowed spaces between the sarcophagi.







### ZOMBIE HORDE

As soon as any character moves past the pillars closest to the doorway, eight **zombies** rise up from the shadows and attack. For a 4th-level party, use eleven zombies. For a 5th-level party, use fifteen zombies.

The players should instinctively recognize that this is a potentially overwhelming group of foes—and should remember that focusing on lighting the brazier will aid their efforts to defeat the undead.

The zombies are not smart enough to recognize the destructive potential of the brazier, and they attempt to fight within its light even as that light destroys them.

### DOORS

Stone doors lead into areas 4 and 5, both of them already raised. Each door has a lever beside it that can be used to lower and raise it.

### TREASURE

The characters can claim the *spell scroll* of *prayer of healing* dropped by the acolyte. Additionally, a search of the acolyte's body reveals an additional striking stone and steel rod, letting two characters attempt to light a brazier at the same time.

## AREA 4: TRAPPED TOMB

Pressure plates (marked as triangles on the map) and a nonfunctioning trap in this room are not a threat, but should hopefully make the characters nervous as they explore. There is nothing of value in this room.

This small chamber features a single sarcophagus, more ornate than those seen in the larger crypt. A destroyed zombie is sprawled at the foot of the sarcophagus, its splintered skull all but removed by some massive object. In front of you, you see that object—a spear coming out of one of two holes in the wall, which must have once been part of a trap guarding this area.

## AREA 5: WIGHT TOMB

This chamber features ornately carved bas reliefs along the walls, showing the symbol of Kelemvor alongside magical inscriptions. The same inscriptions cover a sarcophagus against the far wall, which is far more ornate than those seen in the main crypt. The sarcophagus is set with large red gems just beneath its lid.

A *detect magic* spell or similar magic reveals the presence of warding and binding spells within the chamber.

If any character touches the sarcophagus, its lid suddenly bursts off. Any character within 5 feet of the sarcophagus must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone as the lid slams to the floor.



### WIGHT ATTACK

When the sarcophagus lid comes off, a **wight** in gleaming knight's armor stands up within and leaps to the attack. At the same time, the room's magical wards fill the area with a sickly, pulsing red light—and cause the door to slam shut unless it has been spiked open.

The wight is weakened by the warding spells in the room, imposing disadvantage on its attack rolls. The wards also reduce it to 25 hit points for a 3rd-level party, or 35 hit points for a 4th-level party. Give it full hit points if facing a 5th-level party.

### WARDS

The magical wards are a boon to the characters, but their pulsing light can be distracting. Any creature that starts its turn in the room must succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence saving throw or have disadvantage on attack rolls until the start of its next turn.

### DEALING WITH THE DOOR

Any character standing in the entrance to this area when the door falls must decide which side of the door to move to. The character must also succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

Any characters left in area 3 when the door falls can pull the lever to open it and join the fight. If all the characters are in area 5, the door can be opened manually (see “Features of the Crypts,” above).

After the fight, a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check can be made to examine the door mechanism and locate a hidden latch that opens the door from inside. This check cannot be made in combat.

### TREASURE

The sarcophagus is set with four large sardonyx gemstones worth 10 gp each, all of which can easily be pried out.

## AREA 6: DOUBLE DOORS

An intersection of corridors features two stone doors with a lever between them, a sarcophagus in an alcove, and a statue of Kelemvor with a broken seal in its hands.

Nothing hinders the characters from easily claiming this seal—unless they open the doors first. Pulling the lever opens both doors simultaneously, revealing the entrance to area 7 as well as this area—a web-filled chamber whose occupants are not happy to be disturbed.

### SPIDER HUNT

The side chamber is the nest of three **giant wolf spiders**, all of which attack at once. For a 4th-level party, give each spider 18 hit points. For a 5th-level party, give each spider 23 hit points.

If any spider is reduced to 5 or fewer hit points, it scrambles to the back of the side chamber and disappears up one of several rough, narrow tunnels leading to the creatures' hunting grounds on the surface.

### TREASURE

Any search of the webs in the spiders' nest uncovers a purse holding 15 gp, as well as a fine shortsword with a silver handle and a tooled silver scabbard, probably of drow make and worth 20 gp.

## AREA 7: SIDE CRYPT

A statue of Kelemvor with a broken seal at its feet stands along the east wall, while a brazier stands along the west wall. A tattered banner bearing the symbol of Kelemvor hangs on the wall above the brazier.

Four ornate stone sarcophagi stand in the corners of the room, and in an alcove near the entrance. The sarcophagus in the far corner appears to have been broken in half.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals movement within the broken sarcophagus.

### RAGING ZOMBIE

When any character moves more than halfway into the room, an enraged zombie leaps out of the broken sarcophagus, howling in hunger and racing toward the characters.

Use the statistics of an **ogre zombie** for this more advanced foe, but the zombie is a Medium creature. For





a 4th-level party, increase the zombie's Armor Class to 9. For a 5th-level party, increase the zombie's Armor Class to 10.

### TREASURE

The broken sarcophagus holds three tattered devotional scrolls (worth 10 gp total to a temple), and a silver necklace featuring a symbol of Torm (50 gp).

## AREA 8: CHAPEL

The characters are likely to see this area in two stages, interrupted by a fight with the chapel's skeletal guardians.

The corridor opens up to a large chamber with the look of a chapel. Its arched ceiling rises to a height of thirty feet, and magical light shines from the north. The southwest corner of the chamber holds seven plain sarcophagi with wooden coffins stacked between them, many of those rotten and broken open. A large support pillar has a statue of Kelemvor next to it, with a broken seal at its feet. Bones are scattered everywhere, but of more immediate concern are the skeletons that step out from behind the pillar, racing forward to attack.

### WANDERING SKELETONS

The six **skeletons** in the initial part of the room attack any creatures they can see, and should interfere with the characters' attempts to claim the broken seal or push farther into the room.

For a 4th-level party, use eight skeletons. For a 5th-level party, use fourteen skeletons.

### GETTING TO THE BRAZIER

Characters who move far enough into the room to see the brazier on the dais will likely get the idea to rush for that area ahead of the skeletons, then light the brazier as the undead close in. Two things stand in their way, though—the zombies in the western alcove, and a spike trap at the top of the dais stairs (in the square indicated on the map).

### FURTHER EXPLORATION

As the characters move farther into the room (whether during the skeleton fight or after that fight is done), reveal the details of the rest of the chapel. Depending on where the characters go, you might read or paraphrase only parts of the following text.

Wide alcoves before the dais are each set with a stone sarcophagus and lit by a magical torch. The western alcove is occupied by zombies, hunched over something on the floor between them and seemingly oblivious to your presence.



Standing between a pair of pillars, another statue holds a cracked seal in its hands. A ten-foot-deep dais to the north rises six feet above the floor, lit by a magical torch and reached by a short flight of steps. A brazier stands at the center of the dais, with a bas relief of a set of Kelemvor scales carved above it. Oddly, the scales are tipped to the left, where Kelemvor's symbol normally shows them in balance. A large brass key is set into the wall beneath the symbol.

### ZOMBIE DINERS

With a fresh meal in front of them, the two **zombies** ignore the party's fight with the skeletons, not attacking until the first character approaches to within 10 feet of the northernmost statue, or if they are attacked first. For a 4th-level party, use four zombies. For a 5th-level party, use six zombies.

### STAIR TRAP

At the top of the stairs, a hidden pressure plate triggers a mechanical trap. Any creature that steps on the trap causes a cluster of spikes to shoot up into their feet, and must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed





save, the creature takes 9 (2d8) piercing damage, or half as much damage on a successful save.

A character searching the stairs and the dais notes the trap with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check, and can easily step around it. A character climbing the stairs without searching spots the trap only if his or her passive Perception is 18 or higher. A character climbing the stairs at speed has no chance to spot the trap.

### UNFORTUNATE VISITOR

The body being feasted on by the zombies wears the armor and regalia of a cleric, but has been mutilated beyond recognition. (The characters can learn later that this is one of the Grave Robbers. The last one of the group to climb down into this area, he was killed when his climbing rope broke.)

Any character searching the north end of the room notes a pile of broken tile and stone on the ground next to thirty feet of rope with a frayed end. A hole in the ceiling above the pile connects to a rough tunnel leading aboveground, and has a short length of frayed rope visible where it's tied off around a rock spur.

### TURNING THE KEY

The large brass key is magically fitted to the keyhole underneath the bas relief of Kelemvor's symbol, and cannot be removed. When any character turns the key, the scales in the bas relief magically right themselves, and the characters hear the faint sound of a stone door grinding open in the distance, back toward the entrance. (This is the means by which the characters gain entrance to area 9 and the levels below.)

Turning the key back in the other direction puts the scales out of balance once more and closes the door into area 9. Otherwise, after one hour, the key magically

turns back, the scales go out of balance once more, and the door to area 9 automatically closes.

(The Grave Robbers knew of the key's function before entering the chapel through the hole in the ceiling. They quickly turned the key, then fled through this area to avoid fighting the undead here.)

### TREASURE

The dead cleric wears a breastplate in good condition, but it's in bad need of cleaning. If the body is rolled over, the characters find a pouch with a broken potion vial in it, but the body's weapons and pack are gone (quickly grabbed up by the Grave Robbers when they fled this area).

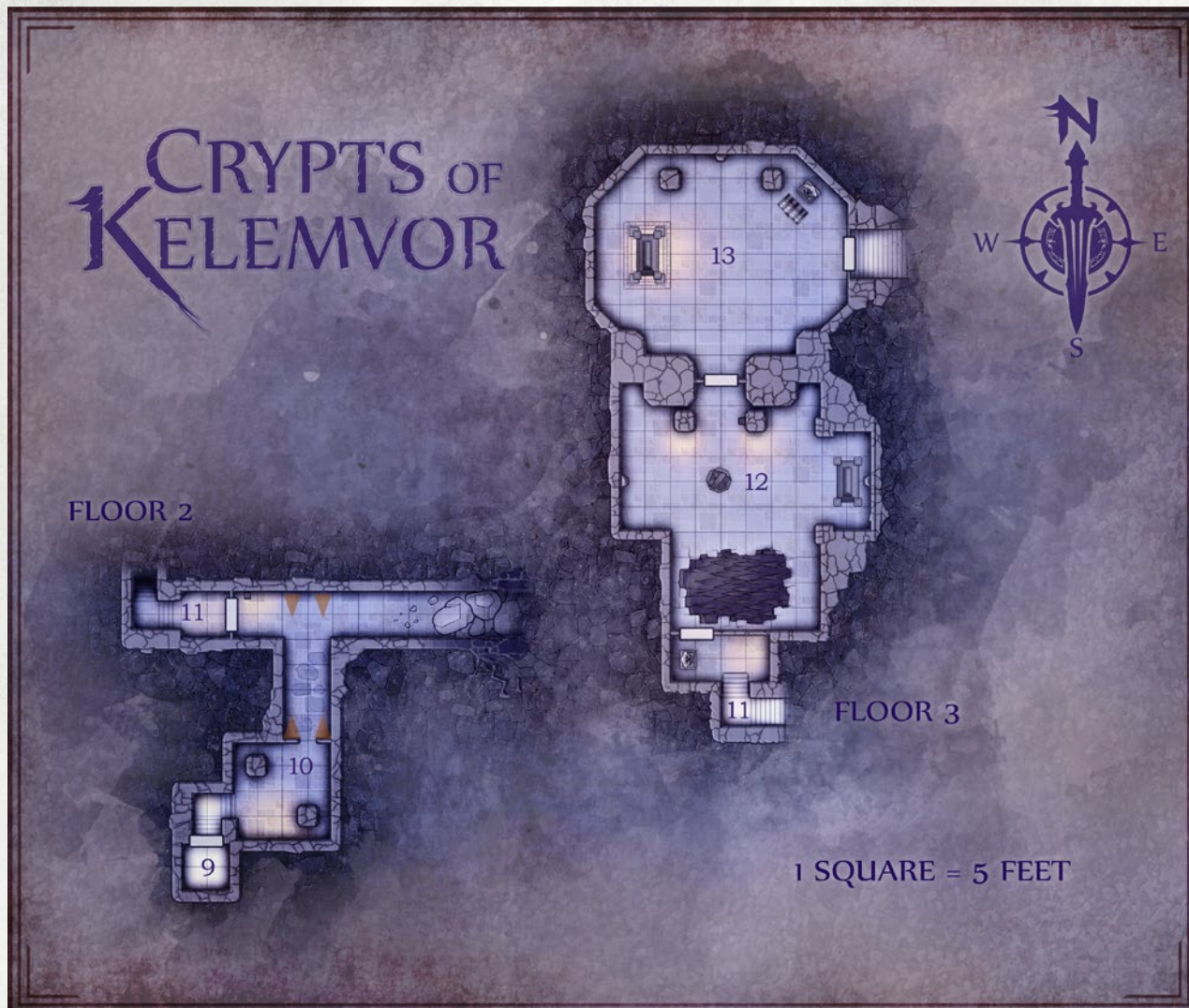
## AREA 9: DARK STAIRS

When the adventurers return to the central intersection (area 2) after turning the key on the dais in area 8, they will see that the stone door to the north has opened as a result.

Beyond the door stands a small room with a lever next to another stone door, already open. Beyond that door, a set of steep stairs leads down into darkness.

A character making a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notes that the second door has been wedged with a spike to keep it open. The door from area 2 was likewise spiked, but the spike was shattered when the door magically closed. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers a hidden latch that opens the door to area 2 from inside this area.





## AREA 10: WARDED HALL

The initial chamber of this area holds only a pair of stone columns, but a dark hallway leads north toward a T-intersection and an east–west corridor.

A successful DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check notes a number of broken crossbow bolts around the southwest column and the southern wall of the initial chamber. This might offer the players a hint of the trap beyond.

### CROSSBOW TRAP

The north-leading hallway is set with a series of pressure plates in the floor, in the area between the triangles appearing on the map. The plates are made of iron concealed under years of dust and rubble, and can be spotted with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Characters not spotting the trap will step on the pressure plates, causing four crossbow bolts to be fired through holes in the north wall. Any characters in the hallway or the eastern part of the initial chamber have

the trap's four attacks randomly divided among them: +4 to hit, 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

The bolts fly the length of the hallway and hit the southwest column and the south wall if they don't strike anyone. If the characters bypass the area and make it safely to the T-intersection, they can easily see the holes in the wall out of which the crossbow bolts fly.

### MOVING ON

The eastern arm of the intersection leads to a collapsed section of hallway that can't be dug out. To the west is a portcullis and a lever, with stairs seen just beyond. The portcullis is already open. Any check made to search it reveals that it is wedged with a spike so that it cannot be closed.

## AREA 11: FAINTLY LIT STAIRS

A set of stone stairs leads down to a landing, then turns to the north. From beyond the bend, a faint rise of flickering light intermittently dances across the walls.



An entry chamber at the bottom of the stairs features a statue holding a broken seal next to an open stone door. It can be easily noticed that the door is spiked open.

Any character who reaches the base of the stairs and succeeds on a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check can hear distant voices.

Voices from ahead are raised as if in argument, but are too far away for any details of the conversation to be heard.

See the next area for more information.

## AREA 12: WARDED CHAMBER

From the entry room of area 11, the characters will be able to see some of the details of this room through the open door, as you determine.

The floor of this rectangular chamber is breached directly in front of the door by a collapsed trap—a spiked pit fifteen feet across and nearly twenty-five feet side to side. Narrow ledges to both sides look as though they should allow passage around the pit. Near the center of the twenty-foot-high chamber, a *brazier of balance* stands unlit. A sealed sarcophagus is set off to the side.

It takes a successful DC 10 Dexterity check to walk around the spiked pit. On a failed check, a character falls into the pit and must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. With a successful save, the character manages to land between the spikes, taking only 3 (1d6) slashing damage from their edges. On a failed save, the character slams down onto the spikes and takes 10 (3d6) piercing damage. If any character falls into the pit, the Grave Robbers across the room (see below) hear it and come over to investigate. Adjust the following part of the encounter as necessary.

### THE GRAVE ROBBERS

When the characters have moved through the open door to see fully into the room, add the following details.

On the far side of the room, an oversized stone door stands closed. In shadowed light, two figures are pacing before the door and its lever, including one carrying an enormous sword. Their hushed argument carries across the room.

It takes a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to hear the details of the argument between the adventurers known as the Grave Robbers. If none of the characters can hear the conversation, paraphrase the following action.





The figure with the sword seems impatient as he grunts, "You going to be there all day? Or should I smash it open now?"

A figure closer to the door snarls back, "I'm a mage, not a rogue. There are heavy wards and strong magic keeping this door sealed."

"So you try, then," the warrior says to someone unseen.

"I told you, it's a magic seal," a third voice says. "Not my thing . . . Wait . . . what's that?"

Suddenly, the third figure steps out from behind a pillar—an archer with bow drawn. "We have company," she calls to her companions.

Whether spotting the characters' light or hearing the sound of their movement, the Grave Robbers' rogue becomes aware of the characters' presence as they draw close.

### FRIEND OR FOE?

This encounter can go a number of different ways, depending on whether the characters try to ally with the Grave Robbers, attempt to see them punished for their desecration of the crypts, or treat them as a direct threat and try to kill them outright.

If the characters try to broker a deal with the group, use roleplaying and DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) checks to determine their success. The Grave Robbers are opportunistic but honest, and are happy to work with the characters to get through to the next chamber in exchange for a fair split of any treasure found there.

If the characters decide to fight the Grave Robbers—or if they fail badly at persuasion or try to intimidate the NPCs—the three are a potent threat.

If the characters want the Grave Robbers punished, the NPCs can be rendered unconscious if defeated, then tied up for delivery to Soulhearth when the adventure is done.

### WARDED DOOR

Pulling on the lever of the stone door in this chamber has no effect as long as the powerful magical wards are in place that hold the door shut. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect, or a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check, reveals that two separate magical wards seal the door. The door can be forced open with a successful DC 30 Strength check, or its wards can be undone with two *knock* spells.

A character who studies the door and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check senses that its magic feeds into the room in some way—a clue that lighting the brazier also unseals the door's magical locks. When the brazier is lit, a pulse of light at the door announces that the wards have been disabled. Pulling the lever then opens the door.

### TREASURE

If the characters fight and defeat the Grave Robbers, they can claim their gear and treasure—mundane

### THE GRAVE ROBBERS

If the characters decide to take on the Grave Robbers, they are in for a tough fight:

- **Samulkin Farcaster** is a tiefling mage and the leader of the group, who uses bravado to hide when he feels that he's in a bit over his head. Use **illusionist** stats for Samulkin.
- **Gromlik Three-Teeth** is a heavily armored warrior with sword and shield. Most folk think he's a dwarf, but no one really wants to ask. Use **knight** statistics for Gromlik.
- **Cailyassa Forgedawn** is a half-elf rogue with a shortbow—and a short temper. Use **scout** statistics for Cailyassa.

Their experience and savvy make the Grave Robbers a challenge for even a 5th-level party. For lower-level characters, make the following adjustments to Samulkin's and Gromlik's stats:

- For a **3rd-level party**, Samulkin has already expended his 3rd- and 4th-level spell slots and has only 19 hit points. Gromlik has only 26 hit points and cannot use his Leadership ability.
- For a **4th-level party**, Samulkin has already expended his 4th-level spell slot and has only 28 hit points. Gromlik has only 35 hit points.

weapons and armor, three *potions of healing*, coins and gems worth 45 gp, and one uncommon consumable magic item of your choice.

## AREA 13: FINAL CRYPT

A low-ceilinged chamber holds a statue of Kelemvor in the northeast corner, with a large chest before it and a broken seal at its feet. A single ornate sarcophagus stands to the west, with a dusty open book set on one of four small plinths that surround it. A dead body sprawls before the sarcophagus, whose sides are marked with skulls and whose engraving carries an arcane flavor not seen in the previous crypts.

With a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check, a character recognizes that the sarcophagus's inscriptions are Thayan in nature. A character with a background related to Thay knows this automatically.

The book on the plinth is a dusty prayer book left here by the Kelemvorites, and worth 10 gp to a temple. The body is an acolyte who died in this place during an earlier rising of undead.

### VENGEFUL UNDEAD

A long-dead mage in the sarcophagus has been raised as a **flameskull** and woken from its undead slumber by the opening of the door into this area. Seeking freedom, it starts to hammer against the lid of its coffin. If the characters lift the sarcophagus lid, the flameskull attacks at once. If they do not, it casts *lightning bolt* (which it has prepared instead of *fireball*) to blast the sarcophagus open before it attacks. Any characters within 10 feet of the sarcophagus must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be struck by shattered





stone for 10 (3d6) damage. Other characters might “accidentally” be caught in the line of the blind-fired *lightning bolt*, as you see fit.

If the Grave Robbers have accompanied the characters into this area, have them join the fight by giving their statistics blocks to three of the players. In that event, the flameskull has 80 hit points and can use its Fire Ray four times with its Multiattack trait. Roll randomly for each attack to determine whether the flameskull targets the player characters or the NPCs.

If the characters can lure the flameskull into the light of the burning brazier in area 12, it will take damage only once from the brazier’s light before retreating and attacking at range.

### BACK DOOR

The characters (and any surviving Grave Robbers) can use the door in area 13 to leave the crypt if they have no reason to retrace their route back through the dungeon. However, the door has no lever, meaning it must be opened manually or with magic.

The stairs climb sixty feet before emerging through a concealed door in a mausoleum near the temple of Kelemvor. (Soulhearth and his fellow acolytes were unaware of this long-forgotten second entrance into the crypts, and are grateful to the characters for bringing it to their attention so they can close it off.)

### TREASURE

The sarcophagus contains only rotting robes. The chest contains tokens and offerings to Kelemvor, most of which are worthless—but includes gems and coins worth a total of 200 gp.

If the Grave Robbers fought through to this area with the characters, increase the amount of treasure so that the characters’ equal share amounts to the total above, and add an uncommon consumable magic item of your choice. The Grave Robbers are more interested in the cash, allowing the characters to haggle for the magic as you see fit.

## EPILOGUE

If the characters fought alongside the Grave Robbers, the NPCs try to beat feet once above ground, not wanting to explain their presence in the crypts to the Kelemvorites. If the characters captured the NPCs, they can deliver them to Soulhearth along with the broken seals. He gives the characters the promised 20 gp, along with his thanks.

Doomguide Soulhearth greets you happily upon your return. “By the scales, you are back! And with the broken seals! Very well done.” He beckons two younger priests to take the seals, then shakes each of you by the hand. “Thank you, friends. Your efforts have saved many today. We will repair and replace the seals before any more of those foul undead escape to ravage our countryside.”

“We are but humble priests here. But please, take this token of our appreciation. Safe travels, and may Kelemvor always keep your path in the balance.”

**Editing, development, and layout for *Dragon+*:**  
Scott Fitzgerald Gray



# APPENDIX: MONSTERS AND NPCs

## FLAMESKULL

*Tiny undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 40 (9d4 + 18)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (–5)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Arcana +5, Perception +2

**Damage Resistances** lightning, necrotic, piercing

**Damage Immunities** cold, fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Illumination.** The flameskull sheds either dim light in a 15-foot radius, or bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet. It can switch between the options as an action.

**Magic Resistance.** The flameskull has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Rejuvenation.** If the flameskull is destroyed, it regains all its hit points in 1 hour unless holy water is sprinkled on its remains or a *dispel magic* or *remove curse* spell is cast on them.

**Spellcasting.** The flameskull is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It requires no somatic or material components to cast its spells. The flameskull has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrip (at will): *mage hand*

1st level (3 slots): *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (2 slots): *blur*, *flaming sphere*

3rd level (1 slot): *fireball*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The flameskull uses Fire Ray twice.

**Fire Ray.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage.

## GIANT WOLF SPIDER

*Medium beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	3 (–4)	12 (+1)	4 (–3)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +7

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Spider Climb.** The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Web Sense.** While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

**Web Walker.** The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

## OGRE ZOMBIE

*Large undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 8

**Hit Points** 85 (9d10 + 36)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	6 (–2)	18 (+4)	3 (–4)	6 (–2)	5 (–3)

**Saving Throws** Wis +0

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** understands Common and Giant but can't speak

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

### ACTIONS

**Morningstar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.



## SKELETON

Medium undead, lawful evil

**Armor Class** 13 (armor scraps)

**Hit Points** 13 (2d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (–2)	8 (–1)	5 (–3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

## WIGHT

Medium undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 14 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 45 (6d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4

**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** the languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the wight has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The wight makes two longsword attacks or two longbow attacks. It can use its Life Drain in place of one longsword attack.

**Life Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under the wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The wight can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

## ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 8

**Hit Points** 22 (3d8 + 9)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (–2)	16 (+3)	3 (–4)	6 (–2)	5 (–3)

**Saving Throws** Wis +0

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

### ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.



# THE GRAVE ROBBERS

## SAMULKIN FARCASTER (ILLUSIONIST)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with mage armor)

**Hit Points** 38 (7d8 + 7)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STRDEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Int +5, Wis +2

**Skills** Arcana +5, History +5

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** any four languages

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The illusionist is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The illusionist has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *poison spray*

1st level (4 slots): *color spray*,\* *disguise self*,\* *mage armor*, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*,\* *mirror image*,\* *phantasmal force*\*

3rd level (3 slots): *major image*,\* *phantom steed*\*

4th level (1 slot): *phantasmal killer*\*

\*Illusion spell of 1st level or higher

**Displacement (Recharges after the Illusionist Casts an Illusion Spell of 1st Level or Higher).** As a bonus action, the illusionist projects an illusion that makes the illusionist appear to be standing in a place a few inches from its actual location, causing any creature to have disadvantage on attack rolls against the illusionist. The effect ends if the illusionist takes damage, it is incapacitated, or its speed becomes 0.

### ACTIONS

**Quarterstaff.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 – 1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8 – 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

## GROMLIK THREE-TEETH (KNIGHT)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)

**Hit Points** 52 (8d8 + 16)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Con +4, Wis +2

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Brave.** The knight has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The knight makes two melee attacks.

**Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

**Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** For 1 minute, the knight can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the knight. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the knight is incapacitated.

### REACTIONS

**Parry.** The knight adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the knight must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

## CAILYASSA FORGEDAWN (SCOUT)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 13 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 16 (3d8 + 3)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.





## The Gribbits Detective Agency

Writers David Harmon and Ben Jenkins bring the Dragon Friends podcast to your tabletop.

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“**T**he Gribbits Detective Agency fits between season one and two of the podcast—right after the destruction of the House of the Artificer and before the Dragon Friends upend and move to Barovia,” explains co-writer David Harmon, when we ask about the module’s place in the Dragon Friends universe.

“When we first recorded the show there were a lot of unanswered questions about what exactly happened between these two episodes. Writing this adventure was a chance to try and set the record straight,” he adds. “There’s also more than a few little Easter eggs for Dragon Friends fans sprinkled into the adventure—things that build on the backstories of NPCs and factions in the podcast, and fun little codas for moments and characters we enjoyed writing. Hopefully fans of the show enjoy them, and strangers to the podcast don’t find them too infuriatingly alienating!”





Gribbits (Select to view)

“I mean, that’s a lot of words to say that we’re basically using this adventure to plug all our idiot plot holes,” says co-writer Ben Jenkins, their natural double act making us grin before we’ve barely started chatting.

Harmon and Jenkins originally came up with a one-page treatment that riffed off a noir mystery. The idea was for adventurers to try and stop the Dragon Friends from doing what they do best: set fire to everything, miss every clue and run away.

“Despite the fact our show is basically barely-controlled insanity, I’d say I’m from the cinematic school of DMs,” says Harmon. “I love big set pieces that are sandboxes for characters to either step up to the plate and do something amazing or fail with spectacular results.





Holstmann (Select to view)

“I’m also a big fan of strong themes and genre cues. In games I’ve played, everyone tends to have a lot more fun when they go in with an idea of the type of story they’re telling. We’ve tried to give DMs a lot of leeway with our adventure here to do just that. Hopefully, they’ll find big moments in an adventure that is a mishmash of our favourite things: dime detective novels, noir and conspiracy stories.”



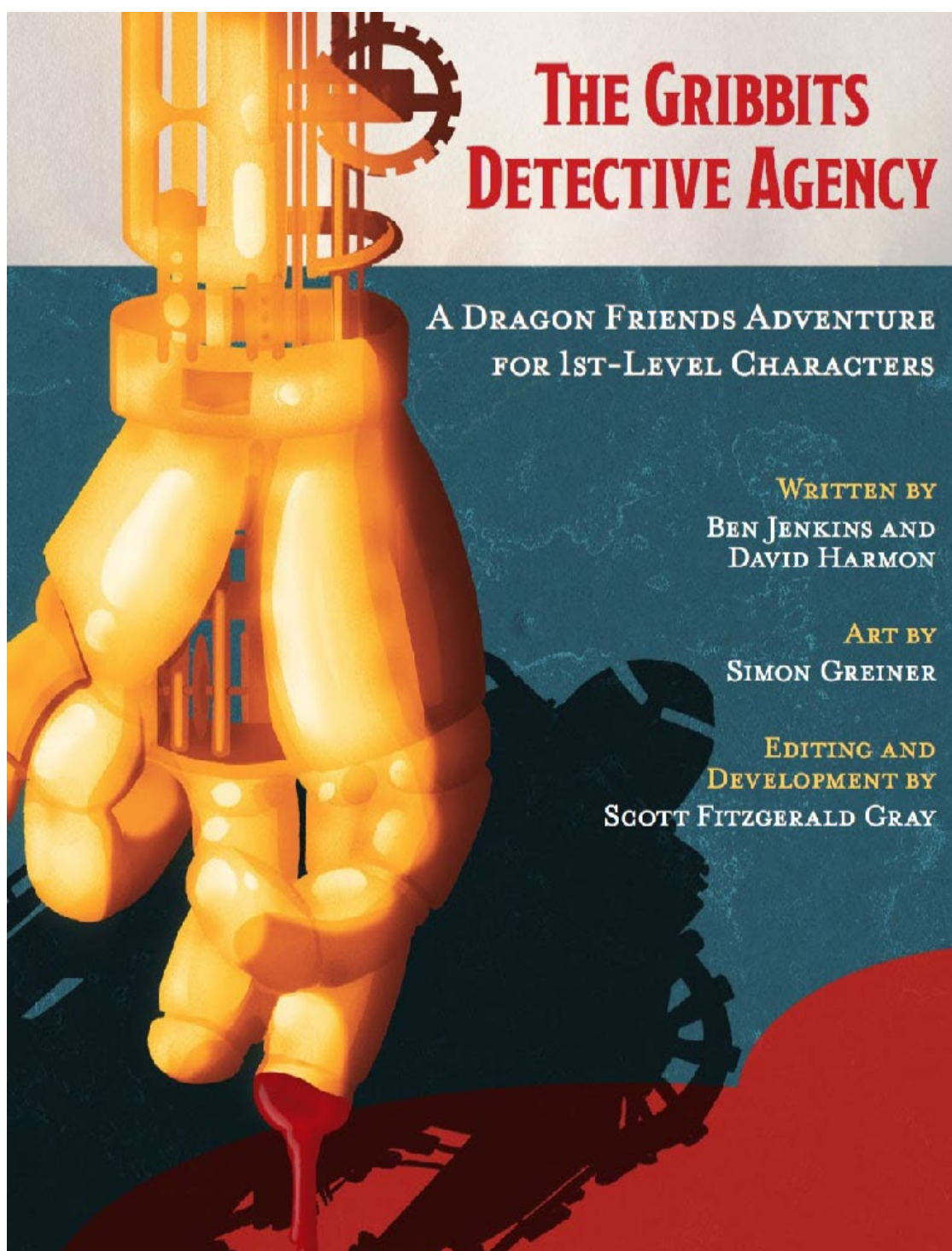
“Genre cues are great,” adds Jenkins. “Everyone’s ingested these tropes by osmosis, so I find it comes really naturally to players.”

The pair worked with artist Simon Greiner to bring the project to life, and are quick to sing his praises. “Not only is Simon an award-winning improviser and storyteller in Sydney, he’s got a background in fine art. He designed a cover for *The New Yorker* once!” raves Harmon.

However, they both agree the illustration *might* be having fun at Jenkins’ expense. “Ben did mention that he thinks the Gribbits picture is a caricature of him, which is both ungenerous and incredibly specific in hurtful ways,” adds Harmon.

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“I do not look like the wretched little goblin,” continues Jenkins. “He does have my hair, though.”

The new season of the Dragon Friends podcast has just started, with the first episode airing 16 February, so if you’re new to the show this is a great time to get involved. You can find them at [the Dragon](#)

[Friends website](#) , on Spotify and [iTunes](#) . “Or by special arrangement, Edan Lacey will fly to your house and hurl a tape deck through your window,” says Harmon.

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# THE GRIBBITS DETECTIVE AGENCY

A DRAGON FRIENDS ADVENTURE  
FOR 1ST-LEVEL CHARACTERS

WRITTEN BY  
BEN JENKINS AND  
DAVID HARMON

ART BY  
SIMON GREINER

EDITING AND  
DEVELOPMENT BY  
SCOTT FITZGERALD GRAY



Janos Meer, the powerful underworld figure known as the Beggar King, has vanished. Gribbits—Meer's right-hand goblin—has tasked a group of neophyte adventurers with getting to the bottom of where his boss has gone, and why. This is easier said than done, of course. The explosive destruction quite accidentally meted out by the Dragon Friends some months prior has made their city a dangerous place. It's up to the adventurers to follow the clues through the urban chaos, unravel the mystery of the missing Meer, and maybe—just maybe—expose a conspiracy greater than any of them expected.

(Unless the players have read this bit . . . in which case, they might well be expecting a great big conspiracy.)

*The Gribbits Detective Agency* is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure for four 1st-level characters.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

For the past two months, Janos Meer—better known as the Beggar King—has been investigating the rise and collapse of the city's sinister Artificer Cult. The Artificers were exposed by the Dragon Friends (working for Meer), in an investigation that culminated with the great fire that consumed half the city. With the cult outlawed, its members have seemingly fled the city, leaving their glitterman construct guards standing dormant throughout the streets.

In this time of urban renewal, much praise has been given to a newly famous Barovian émigré by the name of Alexei 'Lexi' Holstmann. He is a recent investor in an area known as the Shipline district, where the city's shipwrights dry-dock, salvage, and decommission decrepit warships. But Holstmann is better known for having used his wealth to open his factories to the poor and displaced folk of the city. Food and shelter are provided for all those willing to work for the Barovian merchant prince.

Unknown to all, Janos Meer uncovered a plot by Holstmann to convert the vessels of the Shipline into a working armada in service to the Artificers—and was seized as a result. He's now being held in the Shipline to prevent Holstmann's plans from being undone. The characters have just three hours to uncover this plot before Holstmann's refurbished armada launches, and a great new power is established along the Sword Coast.

Unfortunately for the cause of natural justice, the characters are not the only ones investigating Meer's disappearance. The Dragon Friends are also on the trail, and though they mean well, that group of oft-bumbling adventurers is likely to become an incompetent thorn in the side of the party. Even as clever characters expose Holstmann's plots, the Dragon Friends will be coming to entirely wrong conclusions about the source of those plots—and possibly murdering dozens of innocents as a result. It's all in a day's work.

## LOCATIONS

*The Gribbits Detective Agency* is written to take place between seasons one and two of the *Dragon Friends* podcast. As such, it is located in the Dragon Friends'

### THE DRAGON FRIENDS' DETECTIVE AGENCY

This adventure takes place within a tight three-hour time frame. While the characters are investigating the disappearance of Janos Meer, another group of his friends have been tasked with the same job. The Dragon Friends are on the case. Gods help us all.

Use the following guidelines to track the Dragon Friends' movements during the adventure. You can choose to keep Freeze, Philge, and Bobby an "off-screen" presence, with the characters dealing only with the aftermath of their aggressive inquiries. Or you can have the characters bump into them, playing the Dragon Friends using the 1st-level character sheets at the end of the adventure. It's up to you how these two investigations dovetail.

**During the First Bell.** Bobby has found a coded message left for him by Janos Meer that suggests something has happened to the Beggar King. He summons his friend Philge but can't find Freeze, leaving a note at the latter's bakery. When Freeze finds the note, he quickly sets out and the three meet up.

**Before the Second Bell.** The Dragon Friends make their way to the tavern known as the Shady Dock. There—mistaking the bartender's angling for a bribe as complicity in some sort of conspiracy—they begin an all-out bar brawl with the patrons. While one of those patrons is being beaten senseless, he lets slip that something nefarious is happening at a Southern Ward almshouse operated by the Grunwertz Trust.

**Before the Third Bell.** Following their lead, the Dragon Friends make their way to the almshouse. There, they confront Leopold Grunwertz and (incorrectly) decide that he is at the center of a grand conspiracy to use down-and-out folk as slave labor on the Shipline. They burn his operation to the ground.

own peculiar version of Waterdeep—after the collapse of the Artificer Cult and the release of the black dragon Gabu'strath, but before the Dragon Friends leave for Barovia. Interested Dungeon Masters can immerse themselves in this particularly dumb expanded universe at [www.thedragonfriends.com](http://www.thedragonfriends.com) and wherever good podcasts are downloaded.

With that said, the events herein can be transported with little effort to any major coastal fantasy city whose people are recovering from traumatic events. Feel free to substitute Waterdeep with Baldur's Gate, Neverwinter, or another city of your own devising.

The adventure takes place at the following locations within the city:

- **The Beggar Court** in the sewers and tunnels beneath the streets, where the Beggar King holds sway over the wretched thieves and vagrants of the city.
- Various locations in **the streets of the city**, as the characters pursue Janos Meer and his kidnappers.
- Among the decrepit hulks of **the Shipline** and on board ***The Fury of Holstmann***, the Barovian merchant prince's secret flagship.

## KEY CHARACTERS

The following NPCs are central to the adventure.

**Janos Meer.** Cocky, grizzled, and devious, the so-called Beggar King has run the city's unofficial Guild of Thieves, Tricksters, and Beggars as long as anyone





can remember. Deeply suspicious of the Artificers (and of any new power brokers that might replace them), Meer has links to the lords of the city, and often resolves problems too distasteful for civic leadership to contemplate.

**Gribbits.** Janos Meer's faithful quartermaster, lawyer, scribe, and dogsbody, Gribbits is a goblin who has found work in the Beggar Court since a traumatizing period of employment with the Dragon Friends. He has been beside himself with panic since Meer disappeared, and fears that he will somehow be blamed for the loss of a major player in the city's underworld.

**Alexei 'Lexi' Holstmann.** Holstmann is a relative newcomer to the city from the distant nation of Barovia, but he has become quite popular for his willingness to splash money around and for his charity toward the city's poor and displaced. He has been hired by the Artificers to undertake a daring heist—stealing an armada's worth of serviceable warships out from under the nose of the city lords. To this end, he has taken over much of the Shipline district and is using labor from all over the city to refit and ready his fleet for launch.

**Leopold Grunwertz.** The operator of the Grunwertz Trust almshouse has a reputation in the city as a virtuous and charitable figure. But in the aftermath of the great fire, every almshouse in the city has been filled to bursting, and Grunwertz's operation is no exception. Faced with the impossible task of caring for more

people than he can accommodate, the overly trusting Grunwertz has accepted aid from Alexei Holstmann—and has no inkling of the nefarious work to which Holstmann has set the poor folk now under his care.

**The Dragon Friends.** Meer knew he was getting close to the truth of what Holstmann is up to. Just before he disappeared, he got word to his friend Bobby Pancakes, a halfling rogue who travels with the adventuring party known as the Dragon Friends. Bobby and his friends Freezo (a high elf warlock) and Philge (a half-orc barbarian) are now hot on the tail of Janos's kidnappers, and they don't care what they break or set fire to in pursuit of their friend.

Uncovering the Artificer Cult presents a hard enough task for the characters. The Dragon Friends are only going to make it harder.

## ACT 1: A MEETING AT THE BEGGAR COURT

When you're ready to begin the adventure, read the following:

Your attempts to find work in this shining city have brought you more than once into contact with its criminal underworld, and to the attention of the Beggar King, Janos Meer. This morning, you found a card with his mark outside your lodging rooms. There was no other message. None is needed. You are summoned to the Beggar Court.

Deep in the sprawling tunnels and sewers beneath the city's streets, thieves and beggars ply and prepare their trades under the watchful eye of the Beggar King. At least this is usually the case. Janos cuts a conspicuous figure from the wide-open doors of his shambling offices. But today, you arrive to find those doors closed fast, and the ground floor of his operation almost abandoned.

The better part of the day goes by as you wait, before you hear boots on the stairwell. A small, pathetic figure appears, wearing a disheveled suit that seems simultaneously too big and too small. This is the goblin lawyer Gribbits: a dogsbody and assistant that Meer seems to like to have around, though it's hard to tell why.

"Umm. Hello. Mr. Meer is indisposed. Today you'll be working for me." Gribbits clears his throat. "Sorry."

Gribbits doesn't know a lot, and he plays his cards close to his chest. He wants Meer found but doesn't want to give anything away about the Beggar King's work or projects. He'll answer questions about when he last saw Janos (the previous night) and where (in his personal office), but he doesn't want to say what his boss has been doing. He also doesn't want to let the characters search Janos's office, but a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check or a DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) check convinces the goblin to unlock the doors and bring the party inside.



### RUMORS AND INNUENDO

It is a time of rebuilding in the city. A character who succeeds on an Intelligence (Investigation) check of your devising (or who just makes a new friend) might discover a useful bit of information. Roll a d8 or choose from the following:

1. *[In your best (worst) Northern English accent]* "Here's something for ya'. Come closer . . . closer still! I've got me a new hat. All pretty like, you can see it atop me head, here."
2. "There are some nefarious goings-on at the Grunwertz Trust—an almshouse in the Southern Ward. Residents are being exploited for slave labor and the like by their cruel overlord, Leopold Grunwertz."
3. "Stay away from that warlock's bakery. Freezo, I think his name is? I heard that an orphan tried to steal a loaf of bread, and this Freezo turned him into a swarm of bees!"
4. "I saw Alexei Holstmann last week in a tavern, shouting the entire room drinks for the night. As if it wasn't anything."
5. "There's tension between the Shipwrights and the Beggar King. No one really knows who's in charge of the guild since Albrecht Rumsfeld died. Seems that Janos Meer is none too trusting of whoever it is, though."
6. "The Shipwright's Guild? Everyone knows they're actually a secret society operated out the back of the Shady Dock tavern. The guild's leader, Albrecht Rumsfeld, was an emerging player in the underworld before he was killed. And it's whispered that he was a werewolf to boot."
7. "Those glittermen guards the Artificers built might be shiny, but the rusting hulks on every corner are made of worthless alloy. It's not surprising they didn't catch on. Word is they couldn't even operate down at the docks without seizing up. Something about all that salt water."
8. "I was talking to someone at the Shady Dock tavern, used to be a captain. Told me that every single one of the 'derelict' ships abandoned on the Shipline is still true seaworthy."

### OFFICE

Janos Meer's office is a perfect study in conspiracy theorist clichés: an overflowing desk, pitchers of now-cold coffee, and a vast map of the city behind his chair, covered in a mess of notes, etchings, pins, and string. This map tracks Janos's recent investigations into both the collapse of the Artificers and the corruption of the Shipwrights Guild—a criminal fraternity sprung out of the city's Order of Master Shipwrights.

The corrupt Shipwrights have long been a thorn in Meer's side, and have been in turmoil since the death of their leader, the werewolf Albrecht Rumsfeld—another victim of the Dragon Friends' brand of indiscriminate justice. Several locations on the map are clearly marked as being worthy of additional investigation—Freezo's bakery, the House of the Artificers, the Grunwertz Trust almshouse, the Shady Dock tavern, and Manor Holstmann. See "Act 2: The Streets of the City" for more information.

Beyond the map, the office holds little of note. The wall opposite the desk features a truly repulsive example of the local art scene in a gaudy frame. (Sort

of a sad, smiling child on a boat. But he's maybe . . . an angel?) Behind the picture is a locked wall safe.

Gribbits becomes quite upset if the characters remove anything from the room or the safe, but he is too much of a coward to try to stop them. The safe can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, and contains papers relating to the movements of the Shipwrights, ledgers documenting various ne'er-dowells indebted to Janos, and a bag containing 25 gp.

### WHAT HAPPENED TO JANOS MEER?

Following the destruction of the Artificers and the great fire, Meer was tasked by the city lords with hunting down and eradicating any remaining traces of the cult. Meer suspected that the Shipwrights—his longtime enemies and a proxy of the Artificers—were up to something in the Shipline district. This naturally led him to suspect Alexei Holstmann (who has invested heavily in the district) and Leopold Grunwertz (who has provided much of Holstmann's workforce) of being in cahoots with the Shipwrights and the Artificers. It was while searching for proof of these connections that Meer learned of how some of the Shipwrights' leaders have used their influence to have serviceable warships decommissioned and sent to the Shipline.

For getting so close to the truth, Meer has paid a steep price. The previous night, a team of Artificer operatives intercepted him in the course of his investigations. He has been beaten until incapacitated, then bound and transferred to the warship *The Fury of Holstmann*, where he's to be held while Holstmann's final plans play out.

## ACT 2: THE STREETS OF THE CITY

Janos's map features five locations that he felt were significant enough to mark—Freezo's bakery, the House of the Artificers, the Grunwertz Trust almshouse, the Shady Dock tavern, and Manor Holstmann. The characters can visit one location per hour, not knowing that things will come to a head after they visit three of the five locations—one before each of the next three bells that mark off the passage of hours in the city.

It's late afternoon when the characters set out. Allow them to pursue their leads in any order, but make sure they are aware of how time is progressing. After they have visited three locations, they are ambushed by forces in the employ of Holstmann and the Artificers. See the "Ambush!" section for more information.

### BEN AND DAVE SLACK NOTES

**Ben:** How many options do we need for the rumors and innuendo bit?

**Ben:** Twenty?

**Dave:** Reckon we'll be good with ten.

**Ben:** Ah! I reckon twenty's doable, though.

**Dave:** If you think you can do twenty, go for it. But ten is fine. *[Thirty minutes passes]*

**Ben:** F\*\*\* it. I've done eight, and it was a slog.





## FREEZO'S BAKERY

The location noted on Janos's map is in a once-fashionable and now surprisingly affordable part of the city—a bakery sandwiched up against a ruined haberdashery and a shop that sells overpriced collectable pins. With most of the neighborhood showing signs of damage from the great fire, the fresh, solid, and uncharred storefront looks slightly out of place.

“FREEZO'S BAKERY” has been painted on the window in simple, almost childlike letters. A wooden figure stands outside the establishment—an intense-looking high elf with an unnervingly focused smile, presumably a likeness of the baker himself. But despite the signage and the wares in the window, the bakery is closed, and the door is sealed with a rather conspicuous padlock. A sign nailed to the door reads “DANGER! KEEP OUT! GUARD DOGS!” Above and below the sign, two smaller notices have been tacked up.

This bakery is run by the warlock and transient murderer known as Freezo. Some time after the Dragon Friends accidentally engulfed the city in flames, he purchased the business in this once-reputable part of town—a transaction made possible only by the plummeting property values brought on by the fire.

The first note is written in Freezo's childlike scrawl, while the second shows Bobby Pancakes's refined hand. Both are written in Common.

- “NO MONEY KEPT ON PREMISES”
- “F—Came and you were out. Important business from Janos. P with me. Meet us where it shows on the map.” In place of a signature, a stamped seal on the note

shows a pancake with a knob of butter in a skillet. The bottom of the note (where the indicated map was drawn) has been ripped off.

The lock is a suspiciously simple one, and a successful DC 8 Dexterity check with thieves' tools opens it. But though the lock itself isn't trapped, the space just inside the door is rigged with a bucket-and-rope trap. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the trap, while a successful DC 14 Dexterity check allows a character to dodge it. A character caught by the trap is doused in blood—cow's blood, in fact. The rope then also pulls open a trapdoor in the bakery floor, revealing two tiny, angry **ghouls**.

Each ghoul has only 12 hit points due to its emaciated condition. Each has advantage on attack rolls made against any character covered in cow's blood, as a result of the impractical amount of time Freezo has spent training their Pavlovian response to that substance. The ghouls' cage beneath the floor contains only some rags and bones, a tiny bell, and a sign in Freezo's hand that reads “PEOPLE NEVER LISTEN.”

Once the ghouls are dealt with, the characters can help themselves to all the bread they like, or head to Freezo's office in the back of the bakery. This is a surprisingly spartan affair, with competently laid out ledgers and inventory reports, and an iron safe under the desk. There is little suggestion of the baker's personal life, other than a small gilt-framed picture of a smiling elf couple standing in front of a house. A character who removes the picture from the frame finds a note on its reverse side: “SAMPLE PORTRAIT. MAYPOLE & SONS, FRAME MERCHANTS.”

A successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools opens the safe. Contrary to the note at the door, it contains 36 gp and 20 sp, as well as a silver locket with a picture of a smiling man and his son (worth 10 gp) and a tin whistle.



## THE HOUSE OF THE ARTIFICERS

All that's left of the House of the Artificers is a pile of rubble where the building that was the Artificer Cult's public front once stood, and a set of stone stairs descending into the darkness of the levels below. As you move down the staircase, its stones become more charred the deeper you go. At the bottom, you reach a cavernous great hall, entirely blackened and reeking of sulfur. There are no signs of life.

While the cause of the great fire is still disputed, no one argues about where it started. The inferno that would engulf half the city began here in the heart of the Trades Ward, as the blackened walls and stench of death in the great hall of the House of the Artificers attests.

The fire started by the Artificers' enthralled dragon Gabu'strath devastated this part of the city, killing hundreds and leaving thousands homeless. Although signs of fresh construction are everywhere, most houses and tenements are still missing walls and roofing. The almshouses and temples are at capacity, but can still care for only a fraction of the dispossessed.

If the adventurers pick through the debris, they find the rusted body of a glitterman (see the appendix for more on these automata). A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that although the construct has suffered superficial fire damage, its breakdown was ultimately caused by exposure to salt, which has gotten into its intricate clockwork mechanisms and caused a complete seize up.

If the adventurers explore further staircases leading off the great hall, they find themselves in a warren of dirt-floored corridors that have all caved in. In one small antechamber, a carefully arranged pyramid of rocks is topped by a large, filthy hat covered in crude stars and moons. The letters "DILJ" are crudely chalked on a nearby wall, along with a drawing of a sad face. Characters digging under the rocks uncover the body of a small-town half-orc with big-city dreams—and should really take a moment to evaluate their career priorities.

## THE GRUNWERTZ TRUST ALMSHOUSE

If the characters visit the almshouse before the third bell, make use of the following read-aloud text and scenario. If they come here at the third bell, adjust the encounter as detailed in "The Dragon Friends," below.

In the aftermath of the great fire, the Grunwertz Trust has become home to over two hundred of the city's destitute folk. You enter through the unlocked front door, seeing these freshly minted homeless sleeping three to a bed in every room and corridor. There's little space to move as you make your way through the teeming mass of the tired, the hungry, and the generally wretched toward the office of the proprietor, Leopold Grunwertz.

As you open the office door, you find that even this area is being used as makeshift accommodation, with two families working and sleeping across all the available floor space. Grunwertz sits behind a central desk in an angular suit of simple, dark cloth with a tall, starched collar. He peers up at you, removing his spectacles and carefully placing them to the side. He does not seem thrilled to see you.

"Yes?!"

Leopold Grunwertz is trying to get through a mountain of paperwork without waking the sleeping children curled up at the base of his desk. Their parents get on with busywork, sorting through piles of scavenged scrap metal.

Grunwertz is proud of his work, and he freely answers most questions about his operation. He talks of how he doesn't enjoy putting his residents to work, but it's the only way he can afford to accommodate and feed so many of them. The people living in the office are thin and haggard, but they are also extremely deferential to Grunwertz. If asked, they'll say he treats them well and that they're glad to be there.

Grunwertz's plan is to use the money from selling scrap salvaged from the fire to purchase the adjacent property and house hundreds more of the needy. In the meantime, he's been approached by someone he describes as "a philanthropist" (actually Holstmann), who has offered to house the homeless that Grunwertz can't in the wrecks of the Shipline. It's far from ideal, but by all accounts, the hulls of the derelict ships are at least warm and dry.

If the adventurers get an opportunity to search Grunwertz's desk, they find a letter signed "A.H.," asking when Grunwertz expects another group to arrive at the Shipline, and delicately inquiring as to whether their arrival could be expedited. If pressured, Grunwertz might show the letter to the adventurers as proof that the operation he runs is above board.

Alexei Holstmann has sworn Grunwertz to secrecy regarding their relationship. But under sufficient pressure, Grunwertz reveals that the Barovian is his secret philanthropist benefactor.

Grunwertz has very little money, but if the characters threaten him or demand it, he offers them the contents of his safe—213 cp. Everything else, he assures them, is being spent on the poor.

If the characters attack him, Grunwertz calls for Lockwood and Mulligan, two **thugs** who rush in and defend him. The entire almshouse quickly erupts in shouts of alarm, drawing the attention of the city watch if the characters linger too long.

## THE DRAGON FRIENDS

If the characters visit the almshouse on the third bell, they find it burned down by the Dragon Friends, who have deduced (incorrectly) that Leopold Grunwertz is responsible for the disappearance of Meer and is the head of a grand conspiracy.



In this event, the characters find Leopold lingering in the wreckage of his life's work, baffled and broken. He is so distraught that he can't speak, and the characters have no opportunity to learn anything from him or from the terrified folk who fled the fire. However, with no need to spend any time here, the characters can seek out a fourth location before the next bell.

## THE SHADY DOCK

If the characters visit the tavern before the second bell, make use of the following read-aloud text and scenario. If they come here after the second bell, adjust the encounter as detailed in "The Dragon Friends," below.

The sound of off-key sea shanties is heard long before you see the Shady Dock. The waterfront tavern is a weatherboard shack, whose walls lean in a way that suggests the entire structure is trying to hurl itself into the harbor.

As you enter the bar, you're struck by the overpowering smell of vomit and rum. As far as you can tell in the dim light, about twenty patrons are present, all in various states of inebriation. A few stools are available at the bar.

The Artificers might be outlawed in the city, but that cult's junior associates in the criminal fraternity known as the Shipwright's Guild remain a thorn in the Beggar King's side. The Shady Dock is not just the Shipwrights' unofficial guild house and a venue of regular and unspeakable violence. (Although it definitely is both those things.) It's also a trading post for gossip, hearsay, slander, half-truths, and whopping lies. An investigator could do worse than to take a seat and listen in on a conversation or two.

The bartender is an intelligent **bugbear** by the name of Brilig Blackbash. He hears a lot, but—knowing the value of what he hears—is not usually forthcoming with it. Some gold can help him open up. Five **thugs** of the Shipwrights Guild sit near the bar, drunkenly arguing the news of the day.

With a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check (to get close) or Wisdom (Perception) check (to listen in from a distance), a character learns of any of the following useless topics from the patrons of the tavern:

- A recent mutiny near the Moonshae Isles
- A treasure hunter bragging about looting a wreck off the coast of the Mhair Archipelago
- Two drunken half-orcs trying to settle who can shout the loudest

A character who sits discreetly for long enough can also catch a useful tidbit of information: that the Shipline district is full of bursting with the poor and dispossessed of the city, all being paid by 'this new Barovian lord' for their service therein.

No one in the bar has seen Janos Meer for a while, but he never used to come by that much in the first place.

## THE DRAGON FRIENDS

If the characters visit the Shady Dock after the second bell, the Dragon Friends have already stopped by. This has left the public rooms all but demolished, the thugs unconscious, and a very jittery Brilig sporting a black eye—and, inexplicably, a bite mark on his nose. The bugbear makes it clear he wants "no more trouble with adventurers," and breaks down almost immediately in response to a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check (made with advantage if the party includes a half-orc, a halfling, or an elf). Brilig then explains that the Dragon Friends demanded access to Rumsfeld's office, and gives them the key to the office while pleading to be left in peace.

## LOCKED OFFICE

The Shady Dock doubles as the de facto headquarters of the Shipwright's Guild—a secret criminal fraternity in almost-open warfare with Janos Meer's Beggar Court. Albrecht Rumsfeld, the recently deceased leader of the Shipwrights, kept an office in the tavern's back room. Brilig has the key, but the lock can be picked with a successful DC 11 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

The small office stinks of wolfsbane, and contains a utilitarian desk, a chair set with manacles, a small folio, and a long presentation case. The folio contains notes about the building and decommissioning of ships. A character who studies it and has a seafaring background (or who succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence check) notes the curious fact that a number of heavy warships are being decommissioned while still well in their prime. All of those ships have been sent to the graveyard of the Shipline.

The presentation case is empty, though an impression in its velvet lining suggests that it once held a ceremonial sword. A note tucked inside the case has been opened, but still holds a seal impressed with the sigil of the Artificers. The note reads: "Albrecht: I could not ask for a better dockmaster or a fairer friend. Take this gift for your troubles. It's been in my family for generations—and is probably even older than you!—Lexi."

## MANOR HOLSTMANN

The palatial manor that is home to Alexei Holstmann is located in the Sea Ward. After walking down a driveway that can be described only as 'punishingly, ostentatiously, and compensatingly long', you arrive at the house proper. Two enormous oak doors are yours to knock on.

Any knocking sees the doors opened by McElroy—a human butler (**commoner**) who informs the party that Commodore Holstmann is not home. McElroy isn't keen on visitors, but if the characters can demonstrate (or fake) decorum and good breeding, he answers a few questions if politely asked. He'll happily explain that the commodore is newly arrived to the city, and can tell a little of Holstmann's history if pressed. His family escaped somehow from Barovia when he was a



### BEN AND DAVE SLACK NOTES

**Dave:** Wait—I'm pretty sure Barovia is landlocked.

**Ben:** Ha! . . . Wait, why is that a problem?

**Dave:** Because you've made him a commodore.

**Ben:** Oh, look, if the Austrians can make *The Sound of Music*, it's fine.

**Dave:** Umm . . . ?

**Ben:** Von Trapp was an admiral!

**Dave:** . . .

**Ben:** Actually, to be honest, I think the Americans made *The Sound of Music*.

**Dave:** We can come back to it.

child, bringing fabulous wealth from the old country. In addition to that wealth, Commodore Holstmann is known for his intelligence, grace, and charity.

If the adventurers inquire about Janos Meer, McElroy says that no one by that name has come by the house, but a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check suggests that he's lying. If the characters sufficiently pressure McElroy, he confesses that in truth, Meer stopped by last week, demanded to speak to the commodore, and was turned away.

If the adventurers want to bypass the aged retainer, they can get inside the ostentatiously arranged Waterdavian townhouse by any appropriate means—picking the lock on a side door and sneaking in, bluffing or intimidating the butler, fighting their way through, climbing in a window, and so forth. Holstmann's furnishings and art are expensive, but are awkwardly bolted down. A skilled thief with plenty of time could claim 75 gp worth of filchable art and goods on the first floor of the townhouse. The second floor and the basement are occupied by servants at all hours of the day, putting them off limits for effective burglary.

Although most members of Holstmann's staff are noncombatants, he employs one inadvisably brave kennel hand (a **commoner**) with five hunting **mastiffs**. The dogs can be released at any point if the characters attract attention, threaten McElroy or other servants, or when it's time for them to move on.

### PRIVATE STUDY

Holstmann's study is upstairs in the family wing. Characters will discover it only if they decide to explore the house. If the characters get into the study, they see it dominated by a giant scale model of the Shipline and the commodore's public works in the district. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check notes that the miniature of one of the warships has hairline hinges and opens up, revealing a cavity holding a signet ring bearing the sigil of the Artificers.

## AMBUSH!

While the characters have been poking their noses into Lexi Holstmann's business, some of the commodore's associates have become aware of their activities. At the end of the third bell, those associates attempt to dissuade the characters from making any further inquiries.

After the adventurers have investigated their third location, but before they leave that location, one **scout** and three **guards** arrive. The guards attempt to sneak up on the party from concealed ambush points while their scout leader approaches the characters, warning them to back off of their investigation. "The days of the Beggar Court are over, and the bastard Janos Meer is finished—as he should have been long ago." If the characters do not immediately agree to cease their investigation and leave the city, Holstmann's goons attack.

Once defeated, the attackers are each revealed to be wearing a dull clay pendant bearing the unmistakable sigil of the Artificers. One also bears a chit of receipt of payment concerning the delivery of a "valuable item" to a vessel called *The Fury of Holstmann*, docked at the Shipline. If any of the goons are left alive for interrogation, they'll admit their allegiance to the cult and that they were recently hired to kidnap Meer and transfer him to *The Fury of Holstmann*. Their contract came through the Shipwrights, though they don't know who the client was.

If the characters are unfortunate enough to have this encounter at the Shady Dock, Brilig Blackbash and the Shipwright Guild thugs might well join in against the party—making for a fight the characters had best run from. In other areas, the NPCs will run at the first sign of trouble.

## ACT 3: THE SHIPLINE

As the adventurers make their way into the Shipline district, read the following:

It is the fate of every ship made by Waterdavian hands to end up one day propped among the derelict timbers of the Shipline. Once a dry dock of last resort, the Shipline is a place where galleons go to die. Those rotten hulks now teem with life, however, as the destitute and wretched of the city find shelter among their ruined timbers.



THE SIGIL OF  
THE ARTIFICERS



Tonight, the Shipline is a hive of activity even by its typical noisy standards. It's well past twilight, and yet gangs of impoverished laborers are hard at work on at least half the vessels present. A company of six better-dressed sailors is seen heading toward the largest ship on the line—an old triple-master whose weight makes the dry dock groan beneath her. Emblazoned across the bow of the ship is the legend *The Fury of Holstmann*.

Lexi Holstmann has been using the poor and displaced of the city to refurbish the wrecks and hulking landlocked vessels of the Shipline into a serviceable armada. The Artificer Cult has paid him handsomely for this, promising him power and glory as admiral of their newly minted fleet—once he successfully steals that fleet out from under the noses of the city's leaders.

Much of the activity of this refurbishment is centered around *The Fury of Holstmann*—the pride of the line, and already marked by Alexei Holstmann as his flagship. Six sailors (use **bandit** statistics) are headed to it as the characters approach. The cult has been moving sailors onto the ships all day in small groups, in preparation for the pending launch of the fleet.

Characters not wanting to board *The Fury of Holstmann* by way of the gangplank can climb up

the rough sides of the ship with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Using a rope and a grappling hook grants advantage on the check. Climbing characters end up on the open deck of the ship, where each must then succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check to avoid notice from a nearby patrol of three sailors (**bandits**). Similar patrols make rounds along the dry dock if the characters take too long to decide how to get on board.

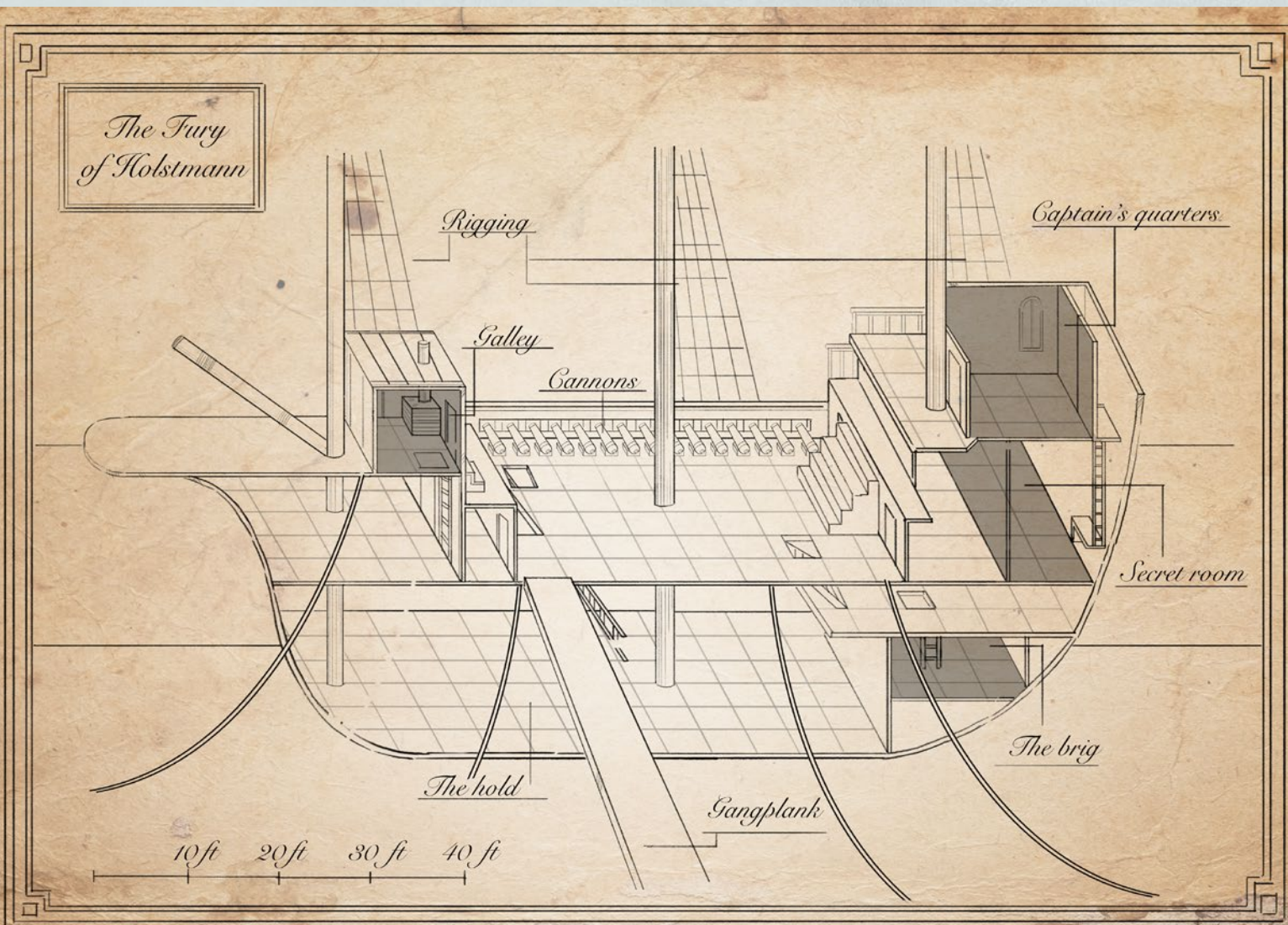
## THE FURY OF HOLSTMANN

*The Fury of Holstmann* is a labyrinthine old frigate. The details of how the characters move between the keyed areas of the ship can be as easy or as complex as desired, but those unaccustomed to shipboard life might struggle to find their way through the maze of decks.

### MOVING AROUND THE DECKS

All the outside decks of the ship are dotted with barrels and crates filled with provisions, black powder, and rum. Sailors and laborers move regularly across the decks, but most keep to their own business. *The Fury of Holstmann* is large and newly crewed, and most members of the crew don't know each other yet. As such, the characters can easily move throughout the ship if they don't cause a ruckus.

If the characters are prowling around any area that doesn't have crew members present in its description,





they have a 1-in-6 chance of attracting the attention of a patrol of three sailors (**bandits**) if that seems interesting.

### A. GANGPLANK

The main point of entrance onto the decks of *The Fury of Holstmann* is a long, narrow ramp leading up from the dry dock. The gangplank is overseen by shift master Carlyle—a no-nonsense sailor (**bandit**) whose flair for penmanship is evidenced by the surprisingly well-kept journal in his pocket. He is immediately suspicious of the adventurers if they attempt to board the ship by the gangplank, and it takes a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check or a DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation) check for him to let them through.

Examination of Carlyle's journal shows that the ship is currently full to bursting with crew members, most of whom have been assigned space in the holds. The journal also shows (or Carlyle can confirm) that Commodore Holstmann is currently on board, and that Janos Meer is detained in the brig.

### B. CANNONS

Fifteen cannons line the starboard deck, each pointing east toward the rest of the “fleet.” Black powder and cannon balls in barrels and crates are stacked neatly nearby. A small chest, more gilded and ornate than the other mundane crates scattered around the decks, sits near the cannon closest the stern, and is sealed with an arcane lock spell. It contains a pair of Barovian dueling pistols, recently commissioned by Holstmann and only just delivered, as well as a bag of twenty powder charges and twenty bullets. Treat a dueling pistol as a hand crossbow that deals 1d10 piercing damage. As an action, a character can reload up to two pistols with powder charges and bullets.

Characters who decide to use the cannons will, unsurprisingly, alert everyone on the ship to their presence. Five of the cannons are loaded, primed, and helpfully aimed at a perilously stacked row of nearby warships, if that's the kind of thing the adventurers might be interested in. A sailor boss (**thug**) and three sailors (**bandits**) race up from the hold 1d3 + 1 rounds after a cannon is fired (see area E for information).

### C. RIGGING

A character can climb the rigging with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, but Meer is nowhere to be found here.

### D. GALLEY

The galley is well stocked with cured meats, barrels of fresh water, and various folk remedies for scurvy. The ship's cook, Steggins, is always present but does not want any trouble. He'll let the characters ransack the room without making a fuss as long as they let him finish making his soup. If they get in the way of his work, the cook goes absolutely berserk, using the statistics of a **thug** and attacking with his huge chef's knife (dealing slashing damage) instead of a mace.

Characters searching the room find a barrel of rum that smells faintly medicinal—because it is. A full waterskin of this tonic provides the benefit of a *potion*

### SCUTTling HOLSTMANN'S PLANS

As they investigate the ship, the characters are able to see that *The Fury of Holstmann* is only lightly secured to the dry dock, held by twelve heavy ropes that can each be cut through with an axe and a successful DC 12 Strength check. Cutting the mooring lines will cause the scuttling of the dry dock, allowing the flagship and the rest of Holstmann's fleet to slip into the harbor. This sabotage has been carefully set up so that Holstmann can steal the fleet in a minimal amount of time.

If the characters decide to cut the lines on *The Fury of Holstmann*, the ship glides into the harbor over the wreckage of the disintegrating drydock. You can decide what ability checks and actions are necessary as the ship lurches into the water, but start with having all the characters succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid being thrown against a bulkhead or into the harbor. While the ship is in the water, roll a d6 each round of combat. On a 5 or 6, a heavy wave heaves the ship, imposing disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks. Anyone proficient in Acrobatics or proficient with water vehicles (which includes all crew members) ignores this effect.

of healing. However, a character who drinks the rum again within a 24-hour period gains no benefit and has disadvantage on any ability checks except Charisma (Intimidation) checks for the next 1d3 hours.

### E. HOLD

Most of the work still being done on the ship is being performed in the hold. Twenty carpenters (noncombatant **commoners**) are watched over by eleven heavily armed sailors (**bandits**) and a sailor boss (**thug**). The cacophony of construction noise and swearing in the confined space of the hold means that no attention is paid to the characters as they approach, and a successful DC 10 group Dexterity (Stealth) check allows them to traverse the room to the brig. Aside from the carpenters and crew, the hold contains a small fortune in building equipment, hammocks, and rope.

If the alarm is raised anywhere on the ship, the sounds of shouting reach the hold in 3 rounds. The sailor boss responds by taking three of the sailors and racing toward the trouble. The other sailors split up into two groups of four to protect the doors to the brig and the captain's quarters.

### F. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Ornate, ostentatious, and dominated by a giant fresco of Castle Ravenloft and the Balinok Mountains of Barovia, this area of the ship makes no attempt to hide its splendor. Expensive furniture fills the room to the point of making it difficult to move, and a candelabra chandelier hangs from the ceiling—an incredibly dangerous bit of decor this close to the gunnery decks.

The commodore is not here. His dressing gown—monogrammed with an “L”—is draped over a needlessly fancy chair.

The fresco on the wall hides a secret door that reveals itself with careful study and a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Pushing on the slightly protruding image of Castle Ravenloft causes it to depress. The entire fresco then swings open,



revealing a shaft and a ladder leading down to the secret cult room beyond.

### G. BRIG

Two **guards**, Langley and Steve, stand before the door to the brig, and are bickering in the way that two guards out in front of any door are wont to do. Any character observing the guards notes that Langley appears to be really into the job. Steve, not so much.

Langley believes in his mission and will fight to the death. He also carries an alarm bell, and will ring it in response to any attack or threat.

Steve has disadvantage on any Charisma contest to convince him to do anything that involves less work. If Steve is reduced to 5 or fewer hit points, he is happy to surrender and tell the adventurers everything he knows: where Meer is held (the brig; Steve has the key), how Holstmann plans to steal the ship (by cutting the mooring lines and scuttling the dry dock), and the fact that Holstmann's pet glitterman arrived on the ship earlier that day.

The brig door can also be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. If the characters get into the brig, they find a gagged, bound, and rake-thin Janos Meer. He smells terrible, is unconscious and of no help to anyone, but is alive.

Meer is in dire shape and comatose. Any healing, magical or otherwise, will stabilize him, but the Beggar King remains unconscious and will need to be carried off the ship and back to the Beggar Court. If the adventurers have not yet fully searched the flagship and confronted Holstmann, the door is sturdy and can be locked up again, ensuring Meer's safety for the short term.

### H. SECRET ROOM

A hatch at the bottom of the ladder can be opened as an action, revealing a secret room prepared and hidden at exorbitant expense by Holstmann. From here, he communes with his masters in the Artificer Cult. The room contains a small bench next to a *sending stone*, along with a weapon rack full of dueling swords and a chest holding some of Holstmann's emergency funds.

If the characters make it here without having the alarm raised, Holstmann is caught unawares. The characters find Holstmann using the *sending stone* to contact the cult, and attempting to negotiate an increase in his fee before his final moment of triumph. Holstmann is not unguarded, however, as his personal **glitterman** stands motionless and concealed by the side of the hatch. Statistics for Holstmann and the glitterman can be found at the end of the adventure.

The glitterman has been ordered to protect Holstmann at all costs. The first character to enter this area must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the glitterman, which otherwise attacks the character with surprise and alerts Holstmann.



COMMODORE ALEXEI  
'LEXI' HOLSTMANN

If the characters have caused the crew to go on alert during their infiltration of the ship, Holstmann is ready for them. He has his *vicious hand crossbow* loaded, and has engaged a poisoned needle trap on the door of the hatch to buy time while pleading with the Artificers for more backup. It takes a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot the trap, and a successful DC 14 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to disable it. The character opening the hatch otherwise takes 1 piercing damage and 5 (1d10) poison damage, and must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. Alternatively, the hatch can be kicked in with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Holstmann might be an idiot, but he fights to the end. Once he is defeated, the rest of the sailors on the ship fall into disarray. If the characters haven't already located Meer (or if they left him behind for safety), he can be quickly rescued in the chaos.

**Treasure.** Holstmann carries a +1 *scimitar* and a *vicious hand crossbow*, along with a concealed sleeve



quiver holding ten bolts. His fine Barovian clothes are worth 40 gp to an appropriate buyer. Around his neck, he wears an Artificer sigil mark—a bronze amulet bearing the secret sign of the Artificer—that he uses to control his glitterman. This has no cash value, but might be a useful tool for those wanting to infiltrate the cult. Holstmann also wears a gold signet ring worth 25 gp, engraved with his family crest.

The locked trunk in this area contains 100 gp. The key is in Holstmann's pocket, or the lock can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

## AFTERMATH

When the adventurers return to Gribbits, read the following:

Gribbits is beside himself with joy, staring at Meer like he can't believe his awful, weird eyes.

"You've done it! You've bloody done it! He's back and he's . . ." The goblin pauses to check the still-unconscious Meer's pulse. "He's alive!"

Gribbits claps his hands twice above his head. "Meat and drink for our brave adventurers!" An awkward couple of moments pass while nothing happens. The goblin lowers his arms. "Right. Well, I guess catering is off for the day. But, you know, good on you and all that."

Meer will need time to recover, but he does not forget the characters' service. Any favor the Beggar King can do for the adventurers, they need but ask, and he instructs Gribbits to pay the characters 50 gp each. In addition, he invites them to open up permanent underground lodgings in the Beggar Court. There, the characters will be paid a stipend to report to Gribbits as and when the Beggar King requires their services. A sign on the door of their new offices reads: "The Gribbits Detective Agency." And the adventure is done.

**The Dragon Friends:** Alex Lee, Edan Lacey, Michael Hing, and Simon Greiner

**Editing, Development, and Layout for *Dragon+*:** Scott Fitzgerald Gray

## NPCs AND MONSTERS

### GLITTERMAN

*Medium construct, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 33 (6d8 + 6)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	1 (–5)	3 (–4)	1 (–5)

**Skills** Perception –2

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Delicate Clockwork.** A glitterman is deathly vulnerable to salt water. If doused with 1 gallon or more of salt water, it takes 2d6 acid damage and is paralyzed for 1d3 rounds.

**Obedient.** The glitterman is magically bound to an Artificer sigil, and is compelled to obey simple orders given by anyone holding and attuned to its sigil. It obeys such orders to the best of its abilities, even if an order would result in its destruction.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The glitterman makes two melee attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

### ALEXEI HOLSTMANN

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 32 (5d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	9 (–1)	13 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Strength +4, Dexterity +5, Wisdom +1

**Skills** Perception +1

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** Common, Barovian

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Fancy Footwork.** If Holstmann makes a melee attack against a creature, that creature can't make opportunity attacks against him for the rest of his turn.

**Quick Combatant.** Holstmann can use a bonus action to take the Dash or Disengage action.


### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Holstmann makes one melee attack and one ranged attack.

**+1 Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Vicious Hand Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 13 (1d6 + 10) piercing damage if Alexei rolls a 20 on the attack roll.




**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®**

**BOBBY**  
 CHARACTER NAME

ROGUE 1  
 CLASS & LEVEL  
 HALFLING  
 RACE

CRIMINAL  
 BACKGROUND  
 CHAOTIC GOOD  
 ALIGNMENT

SIMON  
 PLAYER NAME

**STRENGTH**  
 -1  
 8

**DEXTERITY**  
 +3  
 16

**CONSTITUTION**  
 +1  
 12

**INTELLIGENCE**  
 +1  
 13

**WISDOM**  
 +0  
 10

**CHARISMA**  
 +3  
 16

INSPIRATION

+2 PROFICIENCY BONUS

☐ -1 Strength  
☒ +5 Dexterity  
☐ +1 Constitution  
☒ +3 Intelligence  
☐ +0 Wisdom  
☐ +3 Charisma  
 SAVING THROWS

☒ +5 Acrobatics (Dex)  
☐ Animal Handling (Wis)  
☐ Arcana (Int)  
☐ Athletics (Str)  
☒ +5 Deception (Cha)  
☐ History (Int)  
☐ Insight (Wis)  
☐ Intimidation (Cha)  
☒ +3 Investigation (Int)  
☐ Medicine (Wis)  
☐ Nature (Int)  
☐ Perception (Wis)  
☒ +5 Performance (Cha)  
☐ Persuasion (Cha)  
☐ Religion (Int)  
☒ +5 Sleight of Hand (Dex)  
☒ +7 Stealth (Dex)  
☐ Survival (Wis)  
 SKILLS

14  
 ARMOR CLASS

+3  
 INITIATIVE

25  
 SPEED

Hit Point Maximum 9

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Total 148  
 HIT DICE

SUCCESSES  
 FAILURES  
 DEATH SAVES



10  
 PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

LIGHT ARMOR, SIMPLE WEAPONS, HAND CROSSBOWS, LONGSWORDS, RAPIERS, SHORTSWORDS, THIEVES' TOOLS (DOUBLE PROFICIENCY BONUS), PLAYING CARDS.

**LANGUAGES**  
 COMMON, HALFLING

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

NAME	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE/TYPE
Shortsword	+5	1d6 + 4 / P
Shortbow	+5	1d6 + 4 / P

**RANGE:** YOU CAN SHOOT YOUR SHORTBOW 80 FT., OR UP TO 320 FT. WITH DISADVANTAGE ON THE ATTACK ROLL.

**SNEAK ATTACK:** ONCE PER TURN, YOU DEAL AN EXTRA 1D6 DAMAGE WHEN YOU HIT A TARGET WITH A WEAPON ATTACK AND HAVE ADVANTAGE ON THE ATTACK ROLL, OR WHEN THE TARGET IS WITHIN 5 FEET OF YOUR ALLY THAT ISN'T INCAPACITATED AND YOU DON'T HAVE DISADVANTAGE ON THE ATTACK ROLL.

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

CP  
 SP  
 EP  
 GP  
 PP

SHORTSWORD, SHORTBOW, BELL, LEATHER ARMOR, 5 CANDLES, THIEVES' TOOLS, BACKPACK, CROWBAR, HAMMER, 10 PITONS, LANTERN, FLASK OF OIL, TINDERBOX, COMMON CLOTHES, POUCH.

EQUIPMENT

**Lucky**  
 WHEN YOU ROLL A 1 ON THE D20 FOR AN ATTACK ROLL, ABILITY CHECK, OR SAVING THROW, YOU CAN REROLL THE DIE AND MUST USE THE NEW ROLL.

**Brave**  
 YOU HAVE ADVANTAGE ON SAVING THROWS AGAINST BEING FRIGHTENED.

**Halfling Nimbleness**  
 YOU CAN MOVE THROUGH THE SPACE OF ANY CREATURE THAT IS OF A SIZE LARGER THAN YOURS.

**Naturally Stealthy**  
 YOU CAN ATTEMPT TO HIDE WHEN OBSCURED BY A CREATURE THAT IS AT LEAST ONE SIZE LARGER THAN YOU.

**Criminal Contacts**  
 YOU HAVE CONNECTIONS TO THE CRIMINAL UNDERGROUND IN DAGGERFORD AND WATERDEEP.

FEATURES & TRAITS



# PHILGE

CHARACTER NAME

BARBARIAN 1  
CLASS & LEVEL

HALF-ORC  
RACE

GUILD ARTISAN  
BACKGROUND

CHAOTIC GOOD  
ALIGNMENT

LEEBO  
PLAYER NAME

STRENGTH

**+3**

16

DEXTERITY

**+2**

15

CONSTITUTION

**+2**

14

INTELLIGENCE

**-1**

8

WISDOM

**+1**

12

CHARISMA

**+0**

10

INSPIRATION

**+2**

PROFICIENCY BONUS

☒ **+5** Strength

☐ **+2** Dexterity

☒ **+4** Constitution

☐ **-1** Intelligence

☐ **+1** Wisdom

☐ **+0** Charisma

SAVING THROWS

☐ Acrobatics (Dex)

☐ Animal Handling (Wis)

☐ Arcana (Int)

☒ **+5** Athletics (Str)

☐ Deception (Cha)

☐ History (Int)

☒ **+3** Insight (Wis)

☒ **+2** Intimidation (Cha)

☐ Investigation (Int)

☐ Medicine (Wis)

☐ Nature (Int)

☐ Perception (Wis)

☐ Performance (Cha)

☒ **+2** Persuasion (Cha)

☐ Religion (Int)

☐ Sleight of Hand (Dex)

☐ Stealth (Dex)

☒ **+3** Survival (Wis)

SKILLS

**14**

ARMOR CLASS

**+2**

INITIATIVE

**30**

SPEED

Hit Point Maximum **14**

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Total **1412**

HIT DICE

SUCCESSSES ☐ ☐ ☐

FAILURES ☐ ☐ ☐

DEATH SAVES



NAME	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE/TYPE
Maul	<b>+5</b>	<b>2d6 + 3 / B</b>
Javelin	<b>+4</b>	<b>1d6 + 2 / P</b>

**RANGE:** YOU HAVE TWO JAVELINS THAT YOU CAN THROW UP TO 30 FT., OR UP TO 120 FT. WITH DISADVANTAGE ON THE ATTACK ROLL.

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

**Darkvision 60 ft.**  
SEE IN DIM LIGHT AS IF IT'S BRIGHT LIGHT, AND SEE IN DARK LIGHT AS IF IT'S DIM LIGHT.

**Rage - 2/day for 1 min.**  
YOU CAN ENTER A RAGE TWICE A DAY AS A BONUS ACTION. AS LONG AS YOU ARE NOT WEARING HEAVY ARMOR, YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING FEATURES WHILE RAGING:

- ADVANTAGE ON STRENGTH CHECKS AND STRENGTH SAVING THROWS
- +2 TO MELEE WEAPON DAMAGE ROLLS
- RESISTANCE TO BLUDGEONING, PIERCING, AND SLASHING DAMAGE

**Unarmored Defense**  
WHILE YOU ARE WEARING NO ARMOR, YOUR ARMOR CLASS IS 14 PLUS THE BONUS FOR ANY SHIELD YOU USE.

**Guild Membership**  
YOUR GUILD AND ITS MEMBERS WILL OFFER YOU LODGING, FOOD, AND OTHER SUPPORT.

**11**

PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

SIMPLE WEAPONS, MARTIAL WEAPONS, LIGHT ARMOR, MEDIUM ARMOR, SHIELDS, SMITH'S TOOLS

LANGUAGES  
COMMON, ORCISH, DWARVEN

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

STUDD LEATHER, MAUL, JAVELINS (2), CLOTHES, HEALER'S KIT, BACKPACK, BEDROLL, BELT POUCH, GRAPPLING HOOK, BLACKSMITH'S GUILD MARK, MESS KIT, MIRROR, ARTISAN'S TOOLS (SMITH), WATERSKIN

EQUIPMENT

FEATURES & TRAITS





# FREEZO

CHARACTER NAME

WARLOCK 1  
CLASS & LEVEL

HIGH ELF  
RACE

ACOLYTE  
BACKGROUND

NEUTRAL  
ALIGNMENT

HINGERS  
PLAYER NAME

STRENGTH

-1

8

DEXTERITY

+2

15

CONSTITUTION

+2

14

INTELLIGENCE

+1

13

WISDOM

+0

10

CHARISMA

+2

15

INSPIRATION

+2

PROFICIENCY BONUS

SAVING THROWS

Strength: -1

Dexterity: +2

Constitution: +2

Intelligence: +1

Wisdom: +2

Charisma: +4

SKILLS

Acrobatics (Dex)

Animal Handling (Wis)

Arcana (Int): +3

Athletics (Str)

Deception (Cha)

History (Int): +3

Insight (Wis): +2

Intimidation (Cha)

Investigation (Int)

Medicine (Wis)

Nature (Int)

Perception (Wis): +2

Performance (Cha)

Persuasion (Cha)

Religion (Int): +3

Sleight of Hand (Dex)

Stealth (Dex)

Survival (Wis)

13  
ARMOR CLASS

+2  
INITIATIVE

30  
SPEED

Hit Point Maximum 10

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Total 148  
HIT DICE

SUCCESSSES

FAILURES

DEATH SAVES



NAME	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE/TYPE
Longsword	+1	1d8 - 1 / S
Spell attack	+4	DC 13
Shortbow	+4	1d6 + 2 / P

SPELL SLOTS: 1 X 1ST LEVEL

CANTRIPS: DETECT MAGIC, ELDRITCH BLAST, PRESTIDIGITATION

1ST-LEVEL SPELLS: COMPREHEND LANGUAGES, WITCH BOLT.

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

**Fey Ancestry**  
ADVANTAGE AGAINST BEING CHARMED. CAN'T BE MAGICALLY PUT TO SLEEP.

**Darkvision 60 ft.**  
SEE IN DIM LIGHT AS IF IT'S BRIGHT LIGHT, AND SEE IN DARK LIGHT AS IF IT'S DIM LIGHT.

**Trance**  
DON'T NEED TO SLEEP; MEDITATE FOR 4 HOURS TO GAIN THE BENEFIT OF 8 HOURS OF SLEEP.

**Archfiend Patron**  
YOU HAVE MADE A DEAL WITH AN EVIL DEMON THAT GRANTS YOU MAGICAL POWER.

**Dark One's Blessing**  
GAIN 4 TEMPORARY HIT POINTS WHENEVER YOU REDUCE A HOSTILE CREATURE TO 0 HIT POINTS.

**Pact Magic**  
YOU HAVE SPELL SLOTS AND CAN CAST SPELLS USING CHARISMA.

**Shelter of the Faithful**  
YOU ARE A JUNIOR ACOLYTE OF A LOCAL TEMPLE, AND YOU AND YOUR ADVENTURING COMPANIONS CAN MAKE USE OF MODEST LODGINGS THERE.

FEATURES & TRAITS

12 PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

SIMPLE WEAPONS, LONGBOW, SHORTBOW, LONGSWORD, SHORTSWORD, LIGHT ARMOR.

LANGUAGES  
ELVEN, COMMON, DRACONIC.

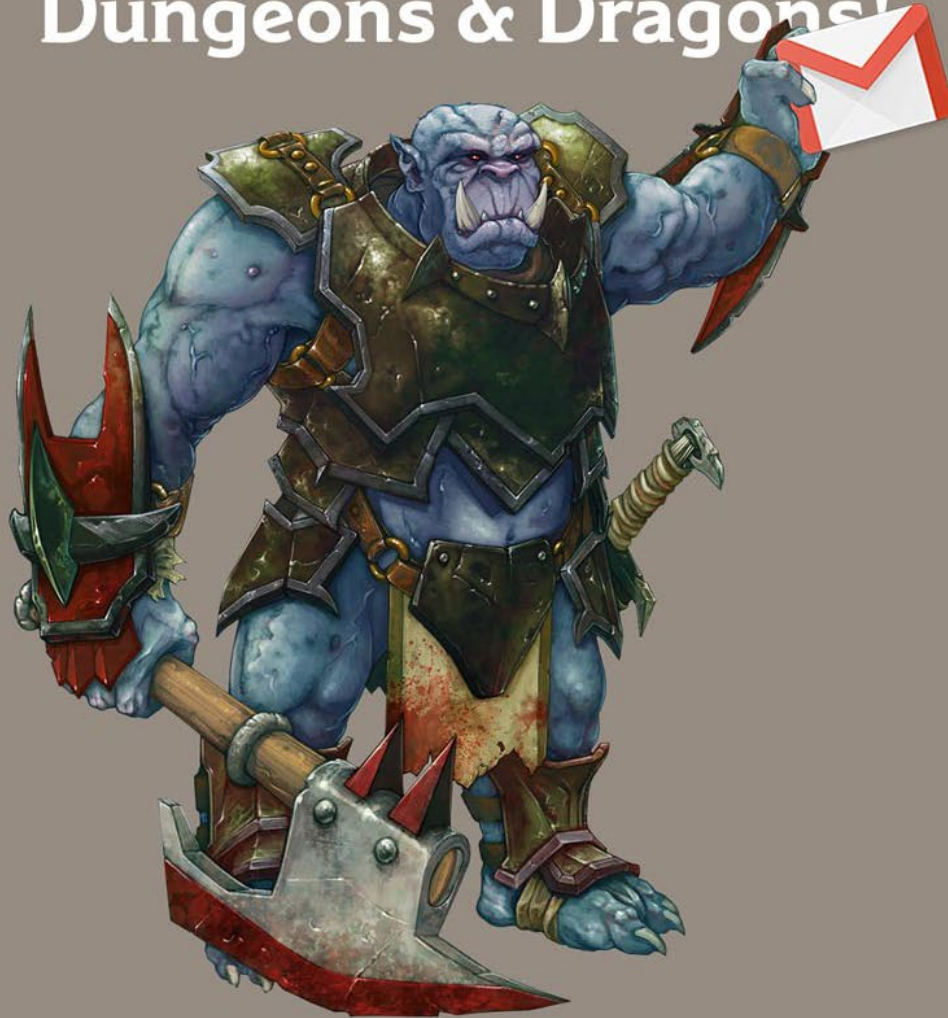
OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

EQUIPMENT

LONGSWORD, ARCANE FOCUS, SCHOLAR'S PACK, 2 DAGGERS, LEATHER ARMOR, PRAYER BOOK, INCENSE STICKS, VESTMENTS, COMMON CLOTHES (BAKER'S OUTFIT), SHORTBOW, QUIVER, MANACLES.



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# Dragonfire: Warlock's Crypt

An exclusive *Dragonfire* adventure for *Dragon+* readers!

Matt Chapman

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Co-operative deck builder *Dragonfire* pits two-to-six adventurers against the dangerous dungeons generated by the game itself. Based on the *Shadowrun* deck-building game, it's been completely redeveloped for D&D from the ground up.

Developer Catalyst Game Labs has created a digital adventure that links *Dragonfire's* *Chaos in the Trollclaws* Adventure Pack to its follow-up, *Sea of Swords*. The scenario for *Warlock's Crypt*, available to download as a PDF below, was inspired by the fiction that accompanies Catalyst's *Chaos in the Trollclaws*.

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[LEARN MORE](#)

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“While we’re introducing our own over-arching *An Ancient Evil Arises* campaign, it’s always woven as tightly as possible into pre-existing D&D lore,” says Randall Bills, Managing Developer at Catalyst Game Labs.





(Select to view)


Bills says the playtests for *Warlock's Crypt* have been enjoyable. And while it is not as outright daunting as some planned additions to its campaign—namechecking *Moonshae Storms* in particular—he says it's still a challenge.

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Visit [Geek & Sundry](#) to see a playthrough and learn the game mechanics of *Dragonfire*, and find further examples of strategy on [the official blog](#).



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*The Winding Waters are blocked, and you put your boats ashore...only to realize to your horror you've stumbled near the Warlock's Crypt! Can you make it past the spell webs to escape?*

### ADVENTURE GOAL

Your party will face off against encounters in three Scenes. Each Scene ends when you have defeated all encounters facing characters. Once the third Scene ends, the party completes the adventure!

### ADVENTURE SETUP

Use City 1 as the Primary Encounter Deck and Dungeon 2 as the Secondary Encounter Deck.

Place three generic tokens alongside of the Adventure Environment card. These are the Warlock's Crypt's spell webs, defense mechanisms forged long ago. Each spell web is tied to one Scene.

Remove all of the Locations from Dungeon 1 and Adventurers 2; without revealing them, draw two encounters from Dungeon 1 and one from Adventurers 2, and shuffle them together, placing them facedown underneath the first spell web token. Repeat for the other two spell web tokens.

All Humanoids and Giants count as Undead and gain: **Save +1**. Any encounters with the printed Undead type gain: **Save +2**.

### ENCOUNTERS

At the start of each Scene, reveal encounters as indicated in the chart below. First reveal encounters from the Secondary Deck equal to the Dragonfire level. Then, if you still need to draw more encounters, reveal remaining encounters from the Primary Deck. Place the first revealed encounter facing the character whose Class Type color matches the encounter's color, and distribute the rest to the left from that character.

SCENE	REVEAL ENCOUNTERS EQUAL TO
1	Number of Characters –1
2	Number of Characters
3	Number of Characters +1

### TRIGGERING THE SPELL WEBS

During Scene One, while there are still other active encounters, at any time during their turn, any player may choose to trigger a spell web and reveal the first spell web's top encounter. Place it facing the character whose Class Type color matches the encounter's



color. The person who revealed the encounter and the player it faces each draw one card. (If it's the same player, they draw two cards.)

Every player may discard one card to discard the revealed encounter and reveal the next encounter from that stack; the encounter is not defeated, so no gold payout occurs. This can be done up to twice per spell web, but the final encounter cannot be skipped and must be faced, even if only one spell web encounter has been skipped for this Scene. New cards are not drawn in conjunction with revealing these additional encounters.

At the end of any turn when there are no revealed encounters, if at least one encounter from the first spell web was not revealed, it is immediately revealed now and placed per the rules above; additional encounters in this spell web, if any, are discarded. If this encounter is revealed at this stage, players do not draw cards and cannot discard cards to discard the encounter.

The same rules above apply to the second and third spell webs during Scenes Two and Three. Players cannot trigger a spell web outside its Scene.

## ENDING A SCENE

The standard rules apply for the Short Rest after each Scene.

## COMPLETING THE ADVENTURE

After Scene Three, the party has completed the Adventure!

## AWARDING XP & MAGIC ITEMS

For each Scene that you start, each player receives 1 XP. If the party completes the entire Adventure, the players each receive a bonus of 2 XP, for a total of 5 XP.

The standard rules apply for awarding Magic Items.

## OPTIONAL SCENARIOS

- **The Darkness Surges:** When building the spell webs, instead of the standard setup, randomly select one non-Location encounter from Dungeon 1 and two encounters from Adventurers 2: +1 XP upon Adventure completion.
- **Spring the Trap:** Gain access to one spell web a Scene early: +1 XP upon Adventure completion.  
Or, gain access to all three spell webs during in Scene One: +2 XP upon Adventure completion.  
Using either of these options allows you to sidestep the restriction on triggering only one spell web per Scene. However, when all standard encounters are defeated, all spell webs that are available for the current Scene will reveal an encounter as per the *Triggering the Spell Webs* rules.

## WARLOCK'S CRYPT: PROLOGUE

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On a turn of the river, you see it ahead. Backlit by a low-slung moon. A series of black towers jut toward the sky—the talons of a great, clawed hand, from which an eerie, unnatural fog spills down into the river valley.

Warlock's Crypt.

Risen from the fallen corpse of an ancient Netherse floating enclave, this city of the undead stands as a blight against all that is revered and right in the world. If you could smite it from existence, of course you would. But its power is beyond you. At least for now. Venturing anywhere close to its putrid miasma would be foolhardy at the best of times, but the river's waters bear you nonetheless, widening and shallowing as you fall into the city's shadow.

The stench of corrupted flesh wafts in with the fog. The air is moist, and cold. Shadows swirl and shift at the edge of your vision. In the distance, to either side of the river's edge, shrieks and the insane touch of cold, cold laughter.

Then—ahead!—a barricade of...bleached timbers...thorny brush...

Steering to the low bank, you drift close enough to see the timbers are the yellowed, ancient bones of giant monstrosities. The skull of a dragon. What could only be an abboleth's spine. In between, piles of humanoid ribcages tied together with sickly, spiked vines. Every thorn appears sharp as a dagger's tip, dripping black ichor into the waters below.

It's a portage you would rather do without, as beneath your feet old bones snap and crunch like brittle twigs. Not fifty feet along the bank you stumble across the shattered remains of paired canoes. A trap!

If a doubt remained, it is dispelled by several large shadows breaking away from the night, shambling forward to bar your path. Eyes aglow in the darkness. Clawed hands already reaching for you.

There are fates worse than death.

And Warlock's Crypt knows them all.

---

### USING THE SIDEBAR RULES BELOW, START ADVENTURE

---

The first time only that you play this Adventure, if the average Campaign Score of the party is 1.5 or more, after all encounters have been revealed at the start of Scene Three, discard a Market card. Place the *Vampire* (Difficulty 3 City encounter from base game) facing the character whose primary color it matches. (If there's a tie, randomly determine where it is placed.) Regardless of whether you complete the Adventure, if you defeat the *Vampire*, all players receive +1 XP.)



## WARLOCK'S CRYPT: EPILOGUE

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The night is alive with hoarse moans and the answering calls of high-pitched screams. Fog clings like the spectral webbing of long-dead spiders. Cold. Moist. Heavy, where it tangles about your legs as you slog through the final portage. Reluctant to let anyone pass.

The stench of rotted flesh and sour earth clings to you still as you splash into the river shallows, below that barricade of bone and poisoned thorns.

Piling into the small craft, shoving off from those hellish banks, everyone takes their toll of the battle. Wounds burn with something worse than infection. One among you draws from their shoulder a sliver of bone like a poisoned quill. Another slaps a dark poultice over bloody furrows raked along one arm. Bad, yes. But, glancing back, it could have been so much worse. The decayed corpses left behind have certainly found no rest, no peace. Many of them begin to stir again, before you've even lost them in the thickening fog.

It's hard to call this a victory. Not when the undead city looms so near...and what has been experienced can't be but a sour taste of its unholy power. But now, for tonight, this is at least something as important.

Survival.

The current isn't swift, not yet, but at least it is steady, and every loud heartbeat takes you that much farther from death's touch. The fog thins, becomes patchwork. Everyone breathes easier, until it lifts for a brief moment and gives all one last glimpse of the naked riverbank.

A skeletal figure, dressed in mail and the moldering remnants of a knight's finery, stands at the water's edge. Sword in hand. Teeth clenched in death's inhumane grin. It follows you with empty sockets filled with sparks of unholy fire. It is there for a moment only before the last touch of fog wreathes it again in distant shadow, leaving behind only the memory of its cold gaze and a single whisper that floats out of the night.

*"Soon..."*

# The Best of the Dungeon Masters Guild

Our Guild Adepts share their tips for collaborating across multiple projects.



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The Dungeon Masters Guild is the perfect platform for creating, sharing, and publishing your adventures. Since its launch, hundreds of DMs, players, and fans have created new characters, monsters, spells, and locations, bringing a wealth of options and detail to the Forgotten Realms.

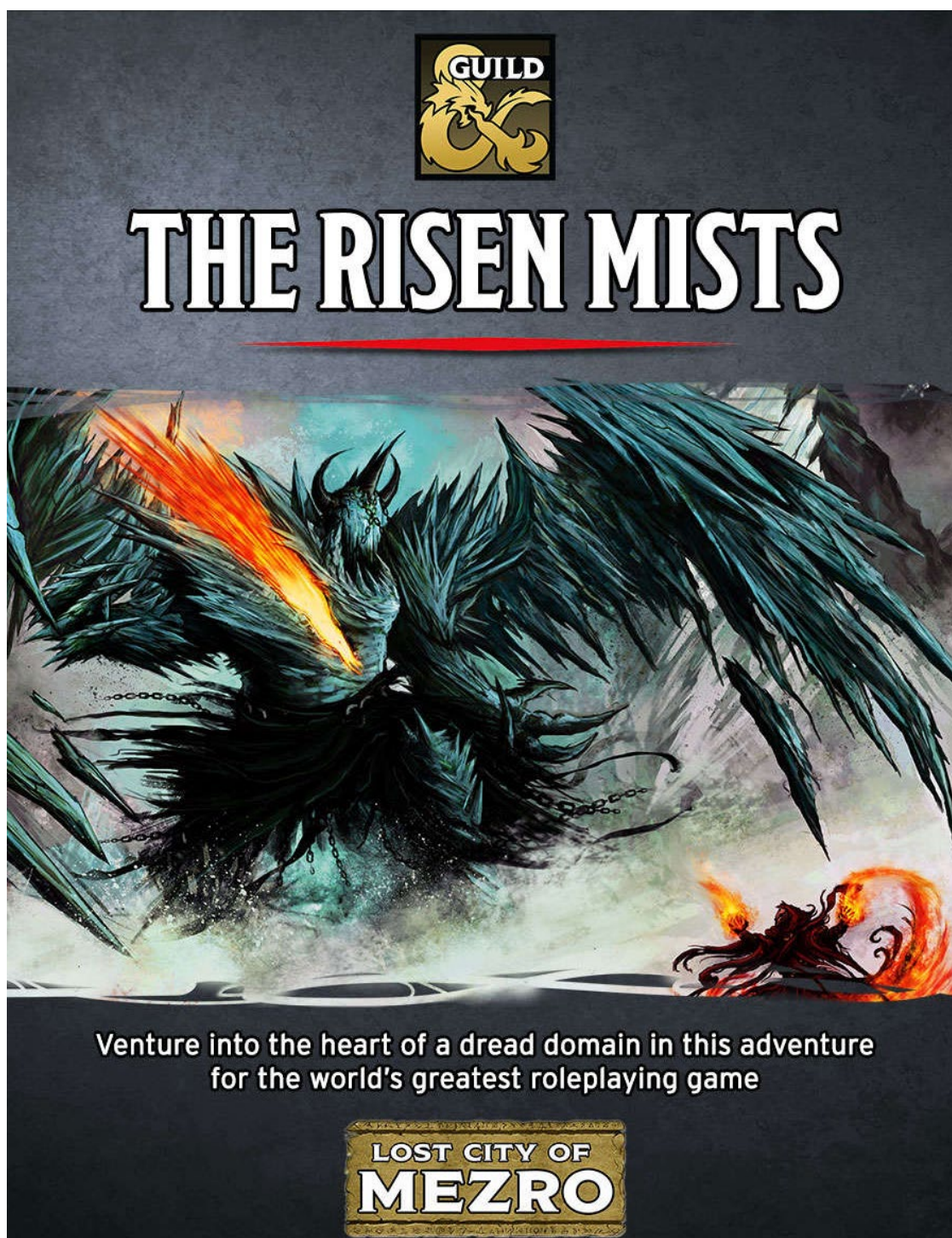




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But with so many choices, how do you know which ones to pick? Well, Dragon+ is here to help. Each issue, we shine a spotlight on some of the best content on the DMs Guild, and speak to its creators to learn how it was made.

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This issue we speak to DMs Guild Adept Rich Lescouflair. His module *The Risen Mists* is the sequel to *Heart of the Wild*, and part of a series that expands upon the storylines encountered in the *Tomb of Annihilation* campaign. Designed for characters from 11-15th level, *The Risen Mists* can be played on its own, as part of a series, or as a follow up to the *ToA* campaign.



Better yet, *The Risen Mists* is available as an exclusive free download for *Dragon+* readers for the duration of this issue! Once you've claimed your module, enjoy our chat with its creator to hear his thoughts on the benefits of skilling up and how to deal with user feedback.



(Select to view)

**You wear many hats as a designer, writer, and cartographer. How do you bring together all the skills necessary to create a great adventure?**

I would like to say I have all those skills because I have a natural aptitude for expanding my horizons, but that's totally not true. [Laughs] It happened out of necessity. I started creating DMs Guild modules and third-party content, then realized there are certain things missing from digital products that I wanted to include. So I bought the software that I needed and then it was just practice, practice, practice. Lo and behold I actually acquired skills during that process!

**What's your background with D&D?**

That's a story in itself. I was in early junior high, just before my teens, and I had gotten into a misunderstanding with a kid in the lunch line, who hit me in the face. We both ended up sitting on the bench in phys ed as punishment, and I looked over and he's flicking through this book containing all of these fantasy pictures, which caught my attention. He was looking at D&D Basic, so I sat down next to him and said, 'Hey man, what's that?' He was my first DM. I got into D&D early and couldn't get enough. At the time I was reading *Choose Your Own Adventure* books and anything that screamed, 'Please roleplay!'



(Select to view)

### What were your first experiences of the DMs Guild?

When the DMs Guild first came out, a lot of people were thinking, 'Hey, I can sell my stuff.' For me it was an opportunity to get my creations out there and in front of other people. I like to share my ideas and this way they could tell me what they thought. I enjoy writing new settings and adventures for my friends and I thought it was a wonderful thing that I was able to do that for complete strangers. I've also been playing Forgotten Realms for a very, very long time and one of my first projects on the DMs Guild came about because I saw an entire continent that no-one had done anything with. So I started building on top of this empty piece of land.

### Is feedback more constructive on the DMs Guild?

It's different in the sense that there are two types of critique you have to sift through. There's the helpful stuff, such as, 'This is what I enjoyed, you might want to think about this,' or someone finding those unavoidable typos that come from working by yourself, which is really what you want when

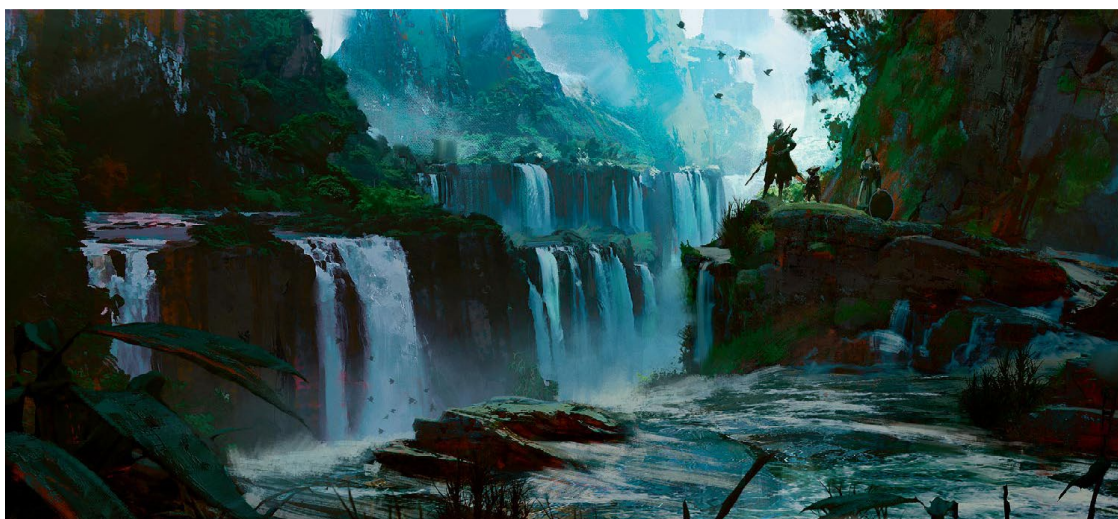




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someone's reviewing your work. Then there's the other kind of feedback, which is more like, 'I didn't like this because it's not what I would have done.' That's the stuff you have to shake off and ignore because they're not writing this, you are.

But I do often get good feedback. If you take your time and try your best to present something good, and people see it's something you worked hard on, even if you get critique, you'll get praise as well. Especially if it's an idea that isn't out there yet. 'I'd never have thought of that,' is the best kind of review you can get.



(Select to view)

*The Risen Mists* is a sequel to *Heart of the Wild*. Does it follow on immediately?

It's not immediate, although it plays not long after that module. *Heart*

*of the Wild* is intended to take place in the *Tomb of Annihilation* campaign. After that hardcover is completed, that's when *The Risen Mists* takes place. It reintroduces Artus and the NPCs from the earlier module, who are now a bit more advanced.



(Select to view)

Is there any difference in designing a higher-level module? *Heart of the Wild* is for levels five to ten, while *The Risen Mists* is for characters who are level eleven to fifteen.

It's a lot longer than *Heart of the Wild*. It does also take a little more playtesting. Tier three characters are the most fun but also the most game-breaking in that sense.

There's so many different things they can do that can derail a game if you're not careful. I knew when I was writing this adventure that it was going to take place in an area

where it would call upon the skills of the characters, versus fighting against them. More importantly, it would give them a number of options to help them progress.

The two modules are part of the *Lost City of Mezro* series...

There is supposed to be a third one in the works, but I'm currently working on a third-party product that is holding my entire attention. It's a science-fiction roleplaying game based on fifth edition, called *Esper Genesis*.

The follow-up to *The Risen Mists* is called *Maze of Shadows*. Will Doyle has put together the *Ruins of Mezro* supplement and one of its adventures is called *Parting the Veil*. That is directly connected to *The Risen Mists*, as the two of us had discussed and planned that. Players who have made it through *The Risen Mists* can continue directly into *Parting the Veil* without missing a beat.





(Select to view)

**You reintroduce two notable monsters to fifth edition in this product. Why did you choose the dracotaurs and the poison dusk?**

I was surprised that the dracotaurs hadn't been included in the books yet. I went through a lot of second and fourth edition books and have been homebrewing some of these monsters. I already had them half-prepared when I was writing the module so it wasn't that difficult to implement them.

Converting into fifth edition can be a little different. I've seen a lot of monster conversions and people tend to try and stick with what was already there. The first thing to do when you convert something to fifth edition is either to create similarities or wipe the template and work from there.

**Newer players might not spot them as old-school monsters, as they do fit the Chult environment, but older players should get a kick out of seeing them...**

I like that. They do fit into the Chult setting quite well but I try and introduce something new into each adventure I write.

Rich Lescouflair is a DMs Guild adept and a writer and designer for the D&D Adventurers League, whose contributions include *In Volo's*

*Wake* and the season seven introduction adventure, *A City on the Edge* . His work also includes The Sundered Realms series, The Forgotten Realms Atlas Project, and *Esper Genesis* —the fifth edition heroic sci-fi setting.

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## Plane Shift: Ixalan

Journey to Ixalan, as D&D crosses over into the world of *Magic: The Gathering*.

---

**F**our mighty peoples face off in a desperate search for a legendary city of gold, hidden deep in the heart of Ixalan. Will you join the vampires of the Legion of Dusk in their march of conquest? Will you stand with the folk of the Sun Empire—and the dinosaurs that serve them—in defending their lands and heritage? Will you join the cunning merfolk of the River Heralds to trick and misdirect the invaders within the great forests? Or will you sail the Stormwreck Sea with the pirates of the Brazen Coalition, seeking plunder and power?

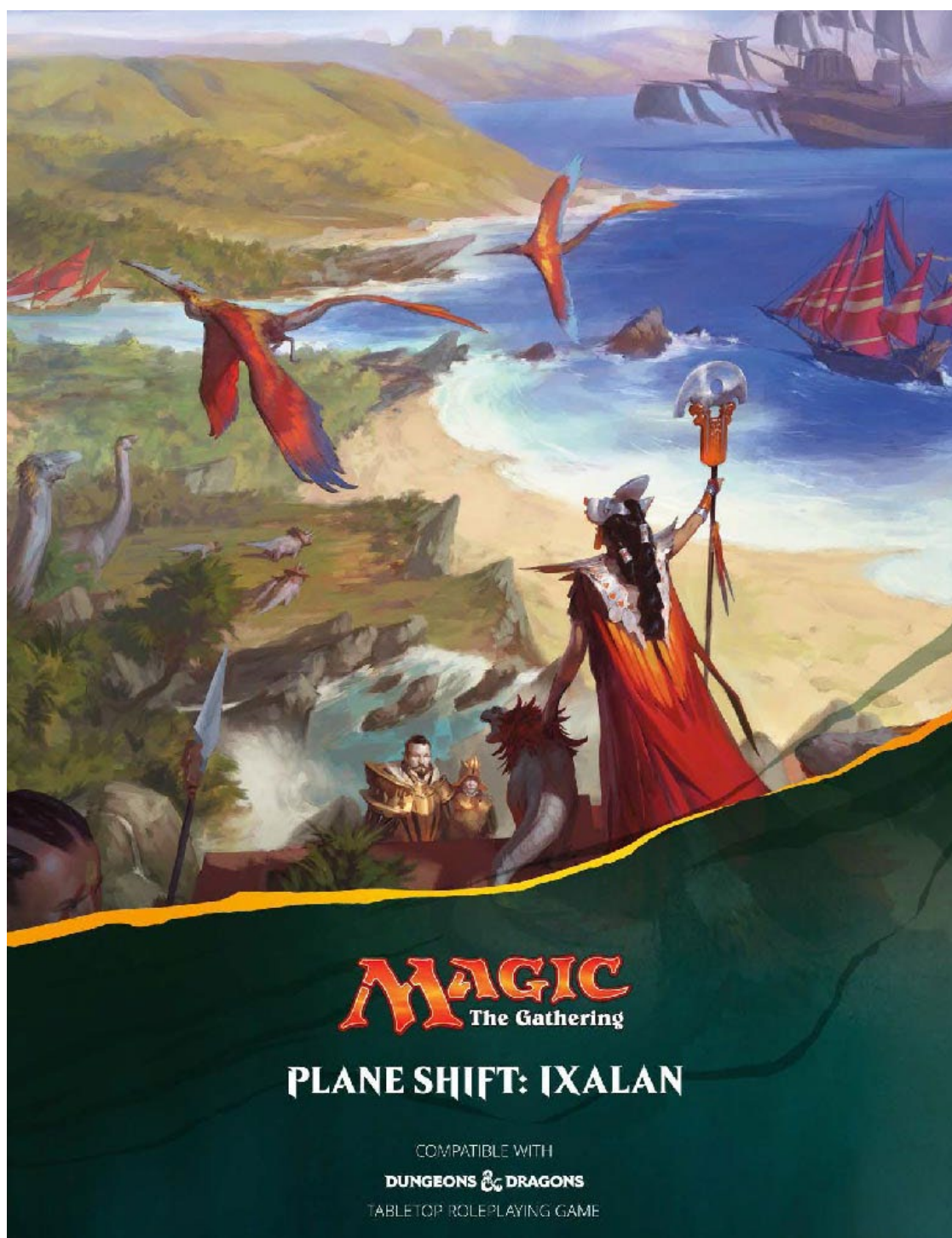


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*Magic: The Gathering*’s Ixalan is the latest plane from the collectable card game to be converted into D&D fifth edition. Author and Senior Game Designer James Wyatt is your guide to its lost cities, dense forests, high seas, and ancient ruins.

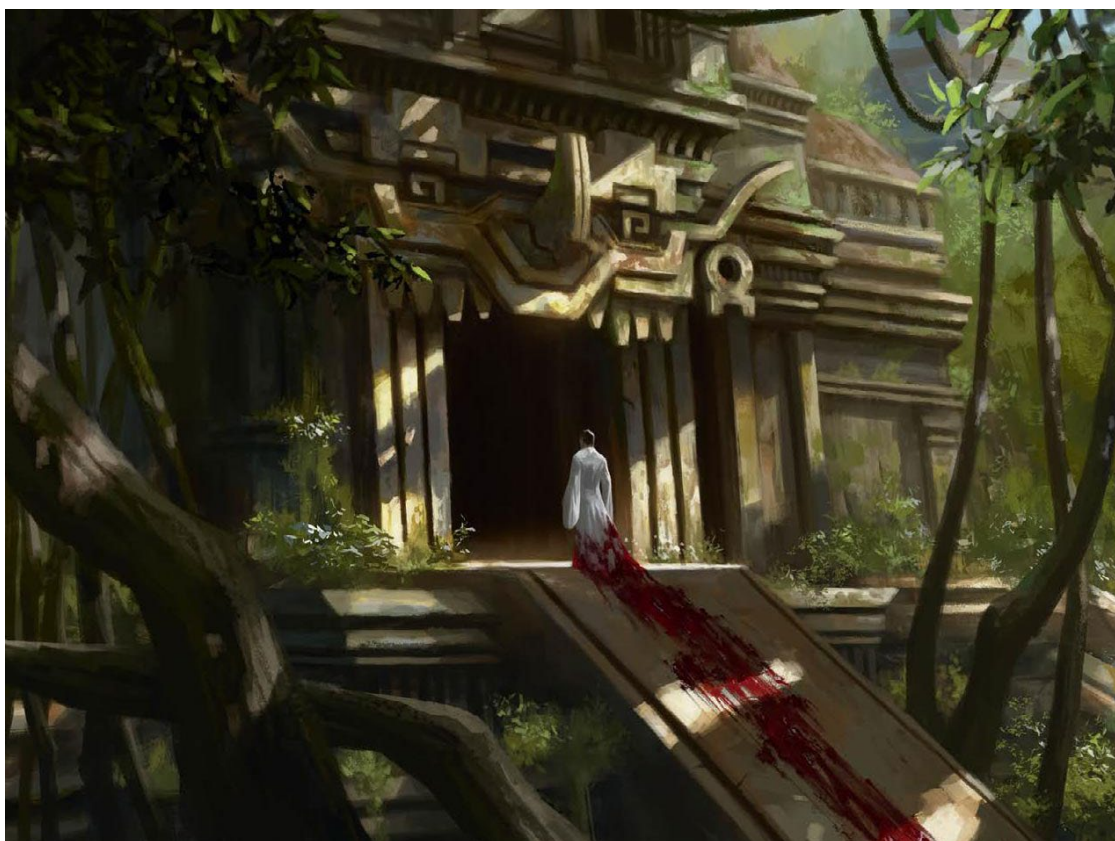
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“There’s a lot of open space on that map,” Wyatt says of the regions included in the *Plane Shift: Ixalan* supplement. “Perhaps betraying my fourteen-year history working on Dungeons & Dragons, Ixalan is a world of exploration and treasure, marked by ancient sites waiting for intrepid heroes to delve into them.”



(Select to view)

“One of those sites, shown on a card in the Ixalan set, is obviously inspired by a classic D&D adventure, *The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan*. This plane lacks only dragons to be a fully realized D&D milieu.”

The game mechanics in the supplement include everything you need to bring Ixalan to life at your Dungeons & Dragons gaming table. New races, new monsters, and tons of roleplaying advice await inside this treasure chest of rules and lore. Some of which may seem familiar already...

“The people who populate Ixalan have a lot in common with D&D characters already, and mapping them to existing classes and backgrounds was a pretty straightforward task,” Wyatt reveals. “Similarly, the creatures of the plane—especially the dinosaurs—had a lot of analogues in the game already. And still, this is the longest instalment of Plane Shift yet!”





(Select to view)

## X MARKS THE SPOT

Game designer and *Magic: The Gathering* Brand Manager, Chris Tulach, created a D&D fifth edition Ixalan adventure for the yearly Extra Life charity event.



[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

This prison-escape scenario sees an unlikely group of heroes brave the unknown in a race to reach an ancient relic before the enemy does. *X Marks the Spot* also includes pre-generated 4th-level cleric, ranger, sorcerer, fighter, rogue, and druid characters from the world of Ixalan.



It is available to download for free from the Adventurers Guild, using the link below. If you would like to donate to the D&D Extra Life fundraising total, [click here](#). Play games, heal kids!

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A vibrant, painterly illustration of a dragon with a mechanical rider. The dragon has a blue and green head with a large, open mouth showing sharp teeth and a pink tongue. Its body is covered in red and purple scales. A mechanical rider with a blue and silver suit and a yellow helmet is perched on its back. The background is a lush, green landscape with trees and foliage.

# MAGIC

The Gathering®

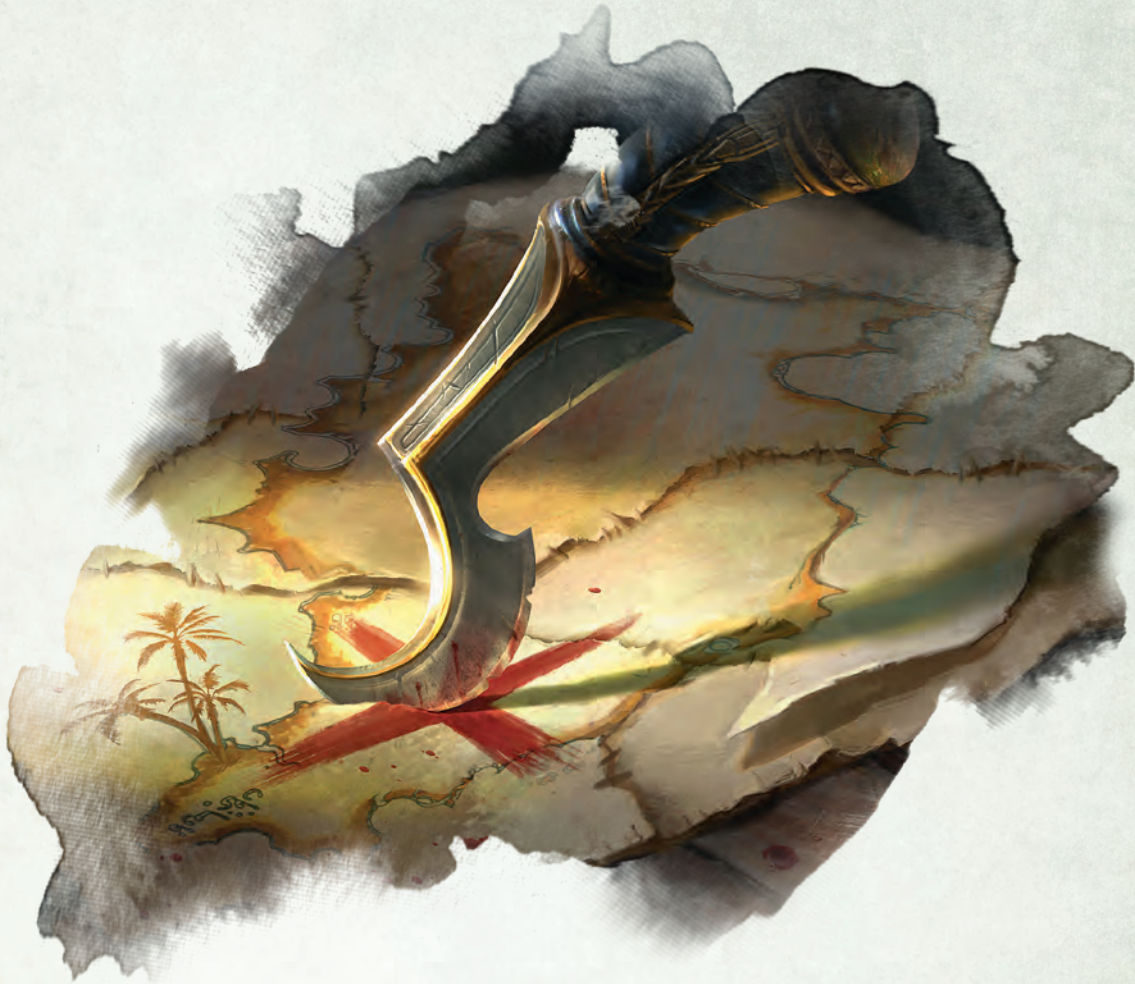
**IXALAN**

**X MARKS  
THE SPOT**

A Plane Shift: Ixalan Adventure for  
**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®**



# X MARKS THE SPOT



A prison escape for an unlikely group of heroes turns into a race for an ancient relic sought by the Legion of Dusk. Can you brave the unknown and capture the treasure before the enemy does? This D&D adventure is set on the plane of Ixalan, and uses 4th-level pregenerated characters.

*A PLANE SHIFT: IXALAN ADVENTURE FOR DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*

## CREDITS

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**Plane Shift: Ixalan Design:** James Wyatt

**Editor:** Scott Fitzgerald Gray

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**Cover Illustrator:** Cliff Childs

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**Cartographer:** Jared Blando

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## BACKGROUND

Ixalan is a land of exploration and discovery. But the Legion of Dusk—a vampire society that formed from an alliance of nobles and the church—has recently arrived from overseas to expand its territories. The legion's army seeks to conquer the island, and the vampires have erected numerous forts in the south. However, their plans have been met with resistance from the inhabitants of Ixalan.

The Sun Empire rules the coast, and has managed to tame dinosaurs enough to work alongside them. Meanwhile, the River Heralds—a loose society of nomadic merfolk tribes—move throughout the interior of Ixalan, at one with nature. These two groups have long held an uneasy accord.

At sea, forces of the piratical Brazen Coalition harry the naval forces of the Legion of Dusk, which make landfall to plunder the bounty of Ixalan as they see fit. But even so, not all vampires view the current ruling establishment as the final authority. The Order of the Five Sacraments, a vampire church sect that believes in establishing a trade relationship with the Sun Empire, hopes to undermine the plans of the would-be conquerors.

## OVERVIEW

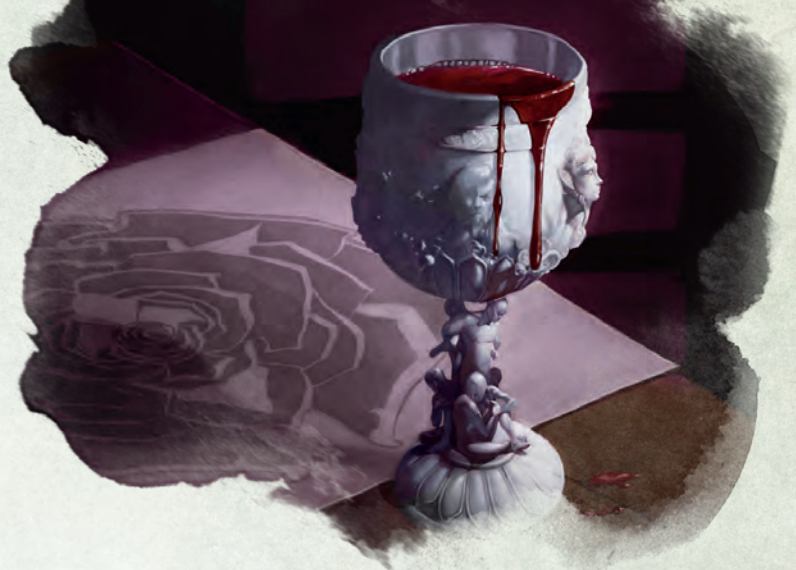
The Legion of Dusk is ruled by rituals that require its members to feed only from the blood of their foes. As such, the legion fortification known as Conqueror's Foothold houses prisoners—enemies of the state and others deemed ne'er-do-wells—who are slaughtered once every full moon.

At the start of the adventure, the characters find themselves imprisoned at Conqueror's Foothold and scheduled to be executed to feed their captors. Alante, a vampire cleric who administers last rites at the fort, aids them in a prison escape. She belongs to the Order of the Five Sacraments, and has been charged with opposing the aims of the Legion of Dusk.

Conqueror's Foothold is overseen by Vona, known as the Butcher of Magan. Vona has uncovered a map of the local region that shows the location of a powerful artifact known as the *Hierophant's Chalice*, hidden in the south of Ixalan at the Temple of Aclazotz. The *Hierophant's Chalice* is rumored to be able to create an endless supply of blood, making it potentially valuable to the vampires of the Legion of Dusk. A prophet named Arguel is rumored to have brought the chalice to the temple for unknown reasons, and Vona wishes to secure it.

In exchange for various favors—in addition to escaping from certain death—the adventurers have agreed to help Alante find the artifact first. Journeying across the island from Conqueror's Foothold to the Temple of Aclazotz takes several days, and brings the characters through dangerous territory and various random encounters.

As they seek the chalice, the characters meet a mad apostle who can lead them to it. At the lost temple that is the chalice's hiding place, the adventurers must face off against the demonic spawn of a bat-god. They are then able to wrest the chalice from the desiccated body of the prophet, who was led to the temple by the demon.



## ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters are on a mission for the Order of the Five Sacraments to retrieve the *Hierophant's Chalice* from the Temple of Aclazotz, deep in the uncharted forests of Ixalan. In addition to the bargains they have struck with the church, each character has been offered 100 gp to retrieve the sacred item and bring it to a rendezvous point south of the island stronghold of Fort Durrion.

The backgrounds provided on the character sheets also provide motivations for the characters to come together as a party.

**Alante** hopes to gain favor with the Order of the Five Sacraments, a sect of the church that believes in establishing a trade relationship with the Sun Empire.

**Velisha** yearns to expel the unnatural force that is rumored to reside in the Temple of Aclazotz.

**Rouxil** wants to bring an end to the conflict in this region of Ixalan by ensuring the Order of the Five Sacraments rises to power.

**Artinoq** desires peace and is eager to show his father that he is a worthy leader.

**Turk Two Coins** desires to claim a share of a great treasure, so that he can live out the rest of his life in debauchery.

**Ellie Redcap** wants nothing more than to captain her own ship—by whatever means necessary.

## TREASURE

This adventure uses *Magic: The Gathering* cards to help build momentum toward adventure progression, and to reward interactive play.

You'll need a handful of Treasure token cards (found in Ixalan booster packs) and a number of cards detailing treasures from the Ixalan set. See "Appendix D: Hidden Plunder" at the end of this adventure for the card list, then shuffle those nontoken cards to make an item deck.

Whenever a player advances an objective, makes an important discovery, or has a good idea, give that player a Treasure token. A player cannot have more than one Treasure token for his or her character. Random encounters then provide an opportunity to uncover a treasure cache. When searching an area, players roll against each other to find treasure, allowing one player to redeem a Treasure token and draw from the item deck.



## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

Once the players have chosen characters, you are ready to begin. Read the following text to set up the scenario and the bargain the characters have made for their freedom.

Your time in the prison cells of Conqueror's Foothold is drawing to an end—as are your lives. Like all those deemed enemies of the Legion of Dusk, you are set to be executed to feed the vampires who command the fortress. On the night before the full moon, you have been moved to the executioner's chamber, next in line to be sacrificed.

But what your captors don't know is that each of you has made a bargain with the cleric, Alante. In exchange for your lives and retrieval of the legendary relic known as the *Hierophant's Chalice*, you have been promised various favors from the Order of the Five Sacraments—a vampiric sect that opposes the Legion of Dusk's thirst for conquest. During your brief time in Conqueror's Foothold, Alante has been able to communicate a plan of escape by sending *message* spells at various interludes. Tonight marks the night that plan comes to fruition.

## THE GREAT ESCAPE

Read the following to set up the characters' escape from the forces of the Legion of Dusk:

You stand in a large holding cell awaiting the executioner's summons. Outside the cell window, a nearly full moon hangs high in the cloudless sky. In the center of the executioner's chamber, a greataxe lies across a stone block. Chains lined with butcher hooks hang above metal vats stacked and waiting to collect the blood of the executed, and reminding you of your imminent appointment with death.

The guards open the metal grate that seals your cell. Stepping into the chamber beyond, you see the cleric who will oversee your sacrifice. That's your cue. It's time to issue last rites . . . to the guards.

The characters have no gear, except for Alante. They are unarmored and can make only unarmed strikes, dealing bludgeoning damage equal to 1 + Strength modifier.

The Legion of Dusk troops stationed at Conqueror's Foothold are loyal to Vona, Butcher of Magan. Two human **guards** have escorted the cleric Alante into the cell. One guard carries a set of keys that can be used to open the prison cells, the main door, and the executioner's hatch (see below). The perimeter of the room is lined

## EXPLORING IXLAN

Traveling from Conqueror's Foothold to the Temple of Aclazotz takes three days by way of the beach or four days through the mountains. While moving through certain terrain (Fort Leor and Fort Durrion, Primal Wellspring, and Uncharted Territory), random encounters might be triggered. Roll a d20 to check for an encounter once during the day and once during the night. If the result is 18 or higher by day, or 15 or higher at night, a random encounter occurs. Refer to the encounter tables in each region to determine what the adventurers meet, and reroll if the result doesn't make sense given the circumstances.

with five other cell blocks, each large enough to hold five prisoners but empty at present.

Only one door leads out of the executioner's chamber. Alante, Turk, and Ellie know that no prisoner has ever successfully escaped from Conqueror's Foothold, and that to go through that door means a vicious fight against dozens of guards, and no guarantee of finding an exit.

**The Executioner's Hatch.** In one corner of the chamber, a padlocked lever stands next to a three-foot-square metal grate. If the lever is unlocked (either with the key carried by the guard or a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools), it can be pulled to drop the grate open. This reveals the executioner's hatch—a chute down which bodies are dumped into the ocean after they are drained of life by the vampires in the fort.

A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check notes that the slick walls of the chute offer no handholds. This makes it a straight drop into the ocean, and prevents anyone from getting back up this way. Characters who jump through the hatch take no damage when they hit the water, and can then easily swim to shore.

One hour after the characters escape, a new group of guards enters the executioner's block and sounds an alert (see "Conqueror's Foothold," below).

Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check notices a **hunter shark** in the water. Any party member who takes damage during the fight with the guards attracts its attention and causes the shark to attack.

## CONQUEROR'S FOOTHOLD

When the characters reach the beach in the shadow of the fortress, read:

The bastioned fortification of Conqueror's Foothold towers high above the sheer cliff side. Waves crash along the rocky shoreline, their caps lit by moonlight.

Artinoq's raptor companion, Sharkbait, waits on the beach with a rucksack containing ten days' rations. Once he sees his companion, he leads the party to a hidden cache buried in the sand, which contains all their confiscated gear. Alante managed to smuggle it out of the fortress a few days ago.





To the north, a trail leads to the Field of Ruin. Following this path through to the northwest mountain passage will take the characters through the Primal Wellspring region, bypassing the strongholds of the Legion of Dusk.

Those strongholds—Fort Leor and Fort Durrone—lie to the west. A well-used path makes travel along that route easier, but the area is often patrolled by soldiers of the Legion of Dusk.

Regardless of which route the characters take, they must venture through Unclaimed Territory before making their way to the Temple of Aclazotz.

**Discovery and Pursuit.** One hour after the characters fought the guards, another patrol enters the executioner's chamber and discovers the escape. A bell-toll alarm sounds out within the fort, and a patrol of twelve **guards** is sent out to comb the area for the prisoners and the duplicitous Alante. Additionally, beacon towers between Conqueror's Foothold, Fort Leor, and Fort Durrone light up, making it difficult for characters who are not with the Legion of Dusk to move along the beach unseen. Any Dexterity (Stealth) checks made by the characters to avoid guards are made with disadvantage.

Two hours after the escape, Vona discovers that Alante is attempting to claim the *Hierophant's Chalice* before he does. The Butcher of Magan assembles a force and sends them out to find the relic first. Vona's relic hunters are comprised of two vampire soldiers (use **guard** statistics), a human cleric (use **priest** statistics), and a human **scout**, all on horseback. They take the most direct route to the Temple of Aclazotz, past Fort Leor and Fort Durrone across the beach. However, they subsequently become lost in the Unclaimed Territory, and can be randomly encountered there.

**Danger on the Beach.** If the characters continue along the shoreline, they come upon the wreckage of numerous ships. Among the dead is the orc Captain Beelzebub from the pirate ship Relentless, on which both Ellie and Turk served. Any character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check notes that the orc appears to have died from stab wounds rather than by drowning.

Any character surveilling the area closely with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices movement in the waves.

Rising from the surf, skeletons dressed in the tattered clothes of pirates shamble toward the shore!

The six **skeletons** attack, gaining surprise if all the characters failed to notice them.

## FIELD OF RUIN

It takes four hours to reach this area from Conqueror's Foothold.

Dozens upon dozens of bodies are strewn about the field in various states of decomposition. The ruined banners of fallen war parties billow in the sea breeze.

The characters can follow a river north to a mountain passage through the Primal Wellspring. To the south is the shoreline. Fort Leor and Fort Durrone are to the west, within sight of the beach.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the presence of scavengers in the field. Three medium raptors (use **deinonychus** statistics) feast on corpses to the west. If the characters notice the raptors, they can attempt a group Stealth check against the creatures' passive Wisdom (Perception) of 13. On a failed group check, or if the characters don't notice the raptors, the raptors spot the party and attack.

**Random Encounters.** If the party travels along the shore near the forts, use the following table if a random encounter is rolled.



## SHORELINE ENCOUNTERS

1d6	Encounter
1	A 20-foot-deep hidden pit trap is noticed only with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The trap fires a flare when triggered, summoning a nearby patrol of 2d6 guards to investigate.
2	1d6 trilobites (use <b>giant crab</b> statistics)
3	A worn jade totem is etched with a warning in Aquan: <i>"No good will come from what you seek. Turn back now or suffer an ignoble death far from your home."</i>
4	An area of quicksand cannot be detected until one or more characters steps within it. The quicksand is 10 feet deep, and any creature that steps into it sinks 1d4 + 1 feet, then sinks 1d4 feet at the start of each of its turns. A successful Strength check (DC 10 + the number of feet sunk) allows a character to escape the quicksand. A rope thrown by any ally to the struggling character grants advantage on the check. Any creature completely submerged begins to suffocate.
5	2d4 raptors (use <b>velociraptor</b> statistics)
6	The characters discover a treasure cache. All characters with a Treasure token card have a contest of Wisdom (Perception), with the character with the highest check trading the token for a card from the item deck.

If the party travels through the interior to avoid the forts, use the following table if a random encounter is rolled.



## INTERIOR ENCOUNTERS

1d4	Encounter
1	2d6 skittering heartstoppers (use <b>giant centipede</b> statistics)
2	The characters discover a treasure cache. All characters with a Treasure token card have a contest of Wisdom (Perception), with the character with the highest check trading the token for a card from the item deck.
3	1d4 aerosaurs (use <b>quetzalcoatlus</b> statistics)
4	1d4 ferocidons (use <b>allosaurus</b> statistics)

## FORT LEOR AND FORT DURRON

A simple structure surrounded by a wooden palisade, Fort Leor is the nearest fortress to Conqueror's Foothold. It takes one day of travel for the characters to arrive here.

Fort Leor stands in the middle of the beach, alongside a river that winds down from the northern mountains to empty into the ocean. Surrounded by a wooden palisade, armed patrols march along the fort's parapet walls.

Fort Durrion, near the Temple of Aclazotz, is a stronghold isolated on an island and home to the armada of the Legion of Dusk. It takes one day to travel here from Fort Leor.

Fort Durrion rises tall on an island to the south. Another bastioned fortress, not unlike Conqueror's Foothold, its looming presence in the distance is made even more ominous by the Dusk Legion dreadnought moored at its stone pier.

**Avoiding Notice.** The characters must pass near each fort. They can use magic or attempt a group Dexterity (Stealth) check (DC 15 to succeed during the day, DC 10 to succeed at night) to travel unseen. At either fort, if the characters are spotted, a patrol of twelve **guards** mounted on **riding horses** moves to intercept. The guards ask the characters their reasons for traveling through the area, and if not convinced by their story, move to attack and apprehend them.

## PRIMAL WELLSPRING

It takes two days to reach this area from the Field of Ruin.

Following the natural path up through mountainous terrain, you eventually make your way down again, moving through a lush canopy of vines into a vivid jungle. Ahead of you, a waterfall erupts from a great stone sculpture jutting out from the side of a cliff, sourced by a powerful spring.





The area around the waterfall spring is covered in thick foliage and tangles of vines, making it difficult terrain. Because there is no natural path through this region, the party's navigator must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check to find the way through to the next region. If the party is moving at a slow pace, the navigator gains a +5 bonus to the check, while a fast pace imposes a -5 penalty. The party's navigator can repeat the check after the party spends 1d6 hours trying to get back on course.

**Lurking Threat.** Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check notes movement beneath the water's surface, masked by the splash of the waterfall. The Primal Wellspring is home to a snapping sailback (use **giant crocodile** statistics).

Disturbing the spring in any manner results in attracting the attention of the creature, which attacks immediately.

The gaping maw of an enormous beast surfaces from the pool, its giant red fin sluicing water across the shore.

## UNCLAIMED TERRITORY

It takes one day to reach this area from Fort Durrion or the Primal Wellspring.

The mist of the mountains clears to reveal a rainforest. The tall trees and foliage around you are alive with movement, and macaws and parrots sing a cacophonous tune.

**An Unlikely Ally.** Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check while moving within the Unclaimed Territory determines that the party is being followed. In response to being spotted (or at any opportune moment), a vampire cleric named Mavren reveals himself to the characters (use **cult fanatic** statistics).

By all outward appearances, Mavren has gone mad. A tall figure with dark hair, sunken eyes, and pallid skin, he is an apostle of the prophet Arguel, and wears the tattered robes of the clergy of the Legion of Dusk. But unknown to the characters, Mavren is secretly under the control of a demon named Zotz—the spawn of a dread bat-god.

Mavren knows the following information, which he shares in the course of any conversation with the characters:

- The prophet Arguel had a vision that led him into the jungles of Ixalan with the Hierophant's Chalice.
- The Temple of Aclazotz is hidden in the nearby jungle, four hours away.
- A murderous creature lurks around the temple, known to Mavren as "the night horror."





## TEMPLE OF ACLAZOTZ

Nearly hidden by the jungle, a stone temple is overgrown with vines. Its broad steps lead up to a darkened entrance, and are caked with a red-black substance. Absolute silence hangs in the area around the temple, as though the site is devoid of life.

Any character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the substance on the steps to be blood. It is impossible to determine how many bodies have been dragged into the temple.

**The Night Horror.** If Mavren led the adventurers here, he urges them to enter quickly, before they wake the creature that lurks in the area.

The characters must succeed on a DC 15 group Dexterity (Stealth) check to pass undetected by this **ch-upacabra**, which attacks if it senses any intrusion into its territory. Mavren abandons the party and retreats into the temple if the characters are attacked.

**Arguel's End.** The interior of the temple is a single chamber with a ceiling thirty feet high. It is unlit, and characters must use light or have darkvision to explore.

The trail from the steps leads into a stone chamber. A strong stench fills the air and the temperature is significantly cooler here than it was outside in the humidity of the rainforest. In the center of the chamber stands a lone altar, upon which lies a corpse.

Characters who move within ten feet of the altar note that the corpse is little more than a desiccated husk. It wears the robes of a marshal from the Legion of Dusk and holds an ornate silver goblet in its hands.

Any character who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check determines that Mavren believes he's working for some higher purpose, but that he is also hiding something. If a character succeeds on a DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check after pressing Mavren, the cleric reveals through his ravings that the Temple of Aclazotz is the home of his demonic master.

Mavren can lead the party directly to the Temple of Aclazotz. If the characters decline his aid, the party's navigator must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check to find the way to the temple. If the party is moving at a slow pace, the navigator gains a +5 bonus to the check, while a fast pace imposes a -5 penalty. The party's navigator can repeat the check after the party spends 1d6 hours trying to get back on course.

**Random Encounters.** As the party travels through the Unclaimed Territory, use the following table if a random encounter is rolled.

### UNCLAIMED TERRITORY ENCOUNTERS

1d6	Encounter
1	2d4 frilled <b>deathspitters</b>
2	1 <b>dryad</b> and 1d12 <b>awakened shrubs</b>
3	Vona's relic hunters: 2 vampire soldiers ( <b>guards</b> ), 1 human cleric ( <b>priest</b> ), 1 human <b>scout</b>
4	The characters discover a treasure cache. All characters with a Treasure token card have a contest of Wisdom (Perception), with the character with the highest check trading the token for a card from the item deck.
5	1 <b>griffon</b>
6	1 wildgrowth walker (use <b>earth elemental</b> statistics)







Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check recognizes the remains as those of Arguel, the prophet rumored to have brought the *Hierophant's Chalice* to the temple—and that it is the actual chalice he holds in his hands. A source of endless blood, the chalice activates when a single drop of blood is placed within it, filling to the brim with sanguineous fluid.

**Demonic Guardians.** Hanging from the ceiling above the altar are four blight keepers (use **giant bat** statistics) and a demon named Zotz (use **vrock** statistics). If Mavren fled from the chupacabra attack, he alerts Zotz, his demonic master, of the party's presence outside. Otherwise, if the characters arrive by day, they find the creatures sleeping and can surprise them if they attack at once and make no loud noise. At night, the characters must succeed on a DC 10 group Dexterity (Stealth) check to enter the temple undetected and get the drop on the demon and its minions.

The spawn of a forgotten bat-god, the demon Zotz means to spread plague and corruption across Ixalan. He has long used his influence upon the insane

Mavren to bring prey to the temple. Seeing how the *Hierophant's Chalice* could be used as a means to broker peace between the Legion of Dusk and the local inhabitants by reducing the need for blood sacrifices, Zotz protects the item and attempts to corrupt it with his demonic essence.

Mavren aids his master in combat. If he survives after Zotz is defeated, the cleric is no longer under the sway of the demon, but he remembers and is haunted by all the horrible things he's done in Zotz's name.

## CONCLUSION

After retrieving the *Hierophant's Chalice* from the Temple of Aclazotz, the characters can make their way to a rendezvous point south of Fort Durrion, previously arranged by Alante. They are met by two emissaries from the Order of the Five Sacraments, who fulfill the terms of the various agreements made with the party members.



# APPENDIX A: MONSTER AND NPC STATISTICS

## ALLOSAURUS

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 51 (6d10 + 18)

**Speed** 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

**Skills** Perception +5

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Pounce.** If the allosaurus moves at least 30 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the allosaurus can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

## AWAKENED SHRUB

Small plant, unaligned

**Armor Class** 9

**Hit Points** 10 (3d6)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Resistances** piercing

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** one language known by its creator

**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the shrub remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal shrub.

### ACTIONS

**Rake.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 1 (1d4 - 1) slashing damage.

An **awakened shrub** is an ordinary shrub given sentience and mobility by the *awaken* spell or similar magic.

## CHUPACABRA

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 45 (6d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Senses** dark vision 120 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the chupacabra has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Drain Blood.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature that is prone, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken, and the chupacabra regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

### REACTIONS

**Pin.** If a creature within 5 feet of the chupacabra stands up, the chupacabra can use its reaction to make a bite attack.



## CULT FANATIC

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

**Armor Class** 13 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 33 (6d8 + 6)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

**Skills** Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Dark Devotion.** The fanatic has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Spellcasting.** The fanatic is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *inflict wounds*, *shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *spiritual weapon*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## DEINONYCHUS

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 26 (4d8 + 8)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	4 (–3)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Pounce.** If the deinonychus moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the deinonychus can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The deinonychus makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

## DRYAD

Medium fey, neutral

**Armor Class** 11 (16 with *barkskin*)

**Hit Points** 22 (5d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Elvish, Sylvan

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The dryad's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The dryad can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *druidcraft*

3/day each: *entangle*, *goodberry*

1/day each: *barkskin*, *pass without trace*, *shillelagh*

**Magic Resistance.** The dryad has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Speak with Beasts and Plants.** The dryad can communicate with beasts and plants as if they shared a language.

**Tree Stride.** Once on her turn, the dryad can use 10 feet of her movement to step magically into one living tree within her reach and emerge from a second living tree within 60 feet of the first tree, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the second tree. Both trees must be Large or bigger.

### ACTIONS

**Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit (+6 to hit with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh*.

**Fey Charm.** The dryad targets one humanoid or beast that she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see the dryad, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed. The charmed creature regards the dryad as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the dryad's control, it takes the dryad's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can.

Each time the dryad or its allies do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the dryad dies, is on a different plane of existence from the target, or ends the effect as a bonus action. If a target's saving throw is successful, the target is immune to the dryad's Fey Charm for the next 24 hours.

The dryad can have no more than one humanoid and up to three beasts charmed at a time.



## EARTH ELEMENTAL

Large elemental, neutral

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 126 (12d10 + 60)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** thunder

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Terran

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Earth Glide.** The elemental can burrow through nonmagical, unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the elemental doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

**Siege Monster.** The elemental deals double damage to objects and structures.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The elemental makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

## FRILLED DEATHSPITTER

Small beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 18 (4d6 + 4)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The deathspitter makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Spit Poison.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 15/30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. In addition, a creature that fails its saving throw is blinded until the end of the deathspitter's next turn.

## GIANT BAT

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 22 (4d10)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Echolocation.** The bat can't use its blindsight while deafened.

**Keen Hearing.** The bat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

## GIANT CENTIPEDE

Small beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 4 (1d6 + 1)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.



## GIANT CRAB

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 13 (3d8)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	1 (–5)	9 (–1)	3 (–4)

**Skills** Stealth +4

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Amphibious.** The crab can breathe air and water.

### ACTIONS

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). The crab has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

## GIANT CROCODILE

Huge beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 85 (9d12 + 27)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	9 (–1)	17 (+3)	2 (–4)	10 (+0)	7 (–2)

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Hold Breath.** The crocodile can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The crocodile makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by the crocodile. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## GRIFFON

Large monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 59 (7d10 + 21)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	2 (–4)	13 (+1)	8 (–1)

**Skills** Perception +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Keen Sight.** The griffon has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The griffon makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

## GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 16 (chain shirt, shield)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Spear.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.



## HUNTER SHARK

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 45 (6d10 + 12)

**Speed** 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	1 (–5)	10 (+0)	4 (–3)

**Skills** Perception +2

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Blood Frenzy.** The shark has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

**Water Breathing.** The shark can breathe only underwater.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

## PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 13 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

**Skills** Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** any two languages

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Divine Eminence.** As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

**Spellcasting.** The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guardians*

### ACTIONS

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

## QUETZALCOATLUS

Huge beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 30 (4d12 + 4)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (–4)	10 (+0)	5 (–3)

**Skills** Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Dive Attack.** If the quetzalcoatlus is flying and dives at least 30 feet toward a target and then hits with a bite attack, the attack deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage to the target.

**Flyby.** The quetzalcoatlus doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature.

*Hit:* 12 (3d6 + 2) piercing damage.

## SCOUT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 13 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 16 (3d8 + 3)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.



## SKELETON

Medium undead, lawful evil

**Armor Class** 13 (armor scraps)

**Hit Points** 13 (2d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (–2)	8 (–1)	5 (–3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

## VELOCIRAPTOR

Tiny beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 10 (3d4 + 3)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (–2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	4 (–3)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Pack Tactics.** The velociraptor has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the velociraptor's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The velociraptor makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

## VROCK

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 104 (11d10 + 44)

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	8 (–1)	13 (+1)	8 (–1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Wis +4, Cha +2

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Magic Resistance.** The vrock has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The vrock makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) slashing damage.

**Spores (Recharge 6).** A 15-foot-radius cloud of toxic spores extends out from the vrock. The spores spread around corners. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While poisoned in this way, a target takes 5 (1d10) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Emptying a vial of holy water on the target also ends the effect on it.

**Stunning Screech (1/Day).** The vrock emits a horrific screech. Each creature within 20 feet of it that can hear it and that isn't a demon must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the vrock's next turn.



## APPENDIX B: LOCATIONS OF IXALAN

Show these illustrations to the players as their characters progress through the adventure.



CONQUEROR'S FOOTHOLD

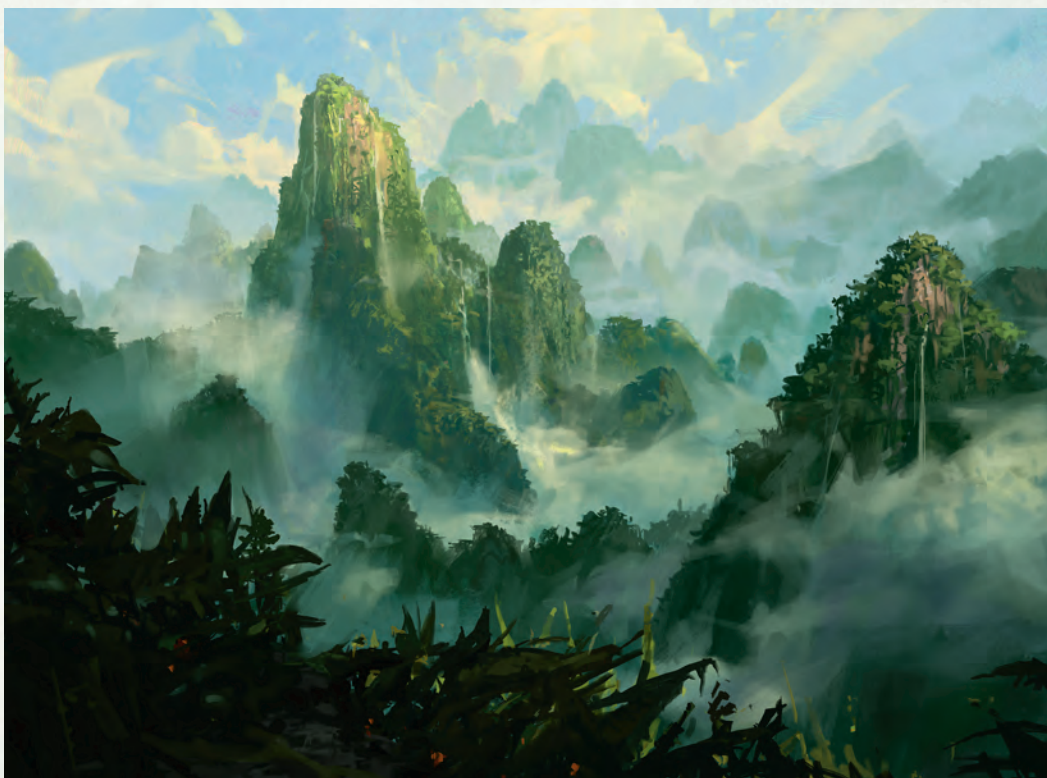


FIELD OF RUIN





PRIMAL WELLSPRING



UNCLAIMED TERRITORY





TEMPLE OF ACLAZOTZ



## APPENDIX C: MAP OF IXALAN

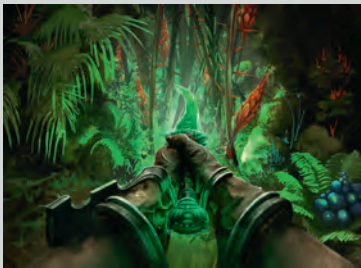


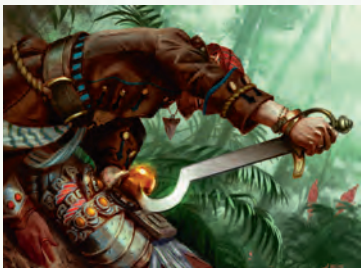
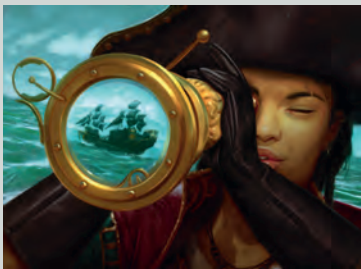





# APPENDIX D: HIDDEN PLUNDER

If you have the appropriate *Magic: The Gathering* cards from the Ixalan set, you can create a deck and have players draw from it when they find a treasure. Otherwise, roll 1d6 on the table below.

## HIDDEN PLUNDER

1d6	Item Name (Card Name)		Description
1	Dowsing Dagger		A curved jade blade fashioned by the River Heralds, this +1 <i>dagger</i> can detect the presence of fresh water within 200 feet of the wielder.
2	Pirate's Cutlass		This +1 <i>shortsword</i> is a terrifying weapon with a serrated edge. It grants its wielder advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks when brandished.
3	Primal Amulet		This beaded jade necklace bears an ancient symbol of the River Heralds. When worn, the <i>primal amulet</i> allows its wearer to cast <i>speak with animals</i> , <i>locate object</i> , and <i>pass without trace</i> . Once the amulet has been used to cast a spell, it can't be used to cast that spell again until the next dawn.
4	Prying Blade		A hooked blade useful on board a ship or as a cutting tool in the wilderness, this +1 <i>shortsword</i> grants its wielder advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks to climb or to escape while restrained.
5	Sorcerous Spyglass		This elegant brass spyglass features an intricate lens mechanism. A creature looking through the <i>sorcerous spyglass</i> has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to detect things that can be seen. In addition, the user can view magical auras while looking through the spyglass, as if under the effect of a <i>detect magic</i> spell.
6	Vanquisher's Banner		This battle-worn but unbroken standard bears the insignia of one of the forces of the Legion of Dusk. A creature that holds the <i>vanquisher's banner</i> can use a bonus action to grant an ally advantage on the ally's next attack roll, saving throw, or ability check.



## APPENDIX E: PLAYER CHARACTERS



ALANTE, CLERIC OF THE FIVE SACRAMENTS



ARTINOQ, ATZOCAN ARCHER



SHARKBAIT



ROUXIL, EMPEROR'S VANGUARD

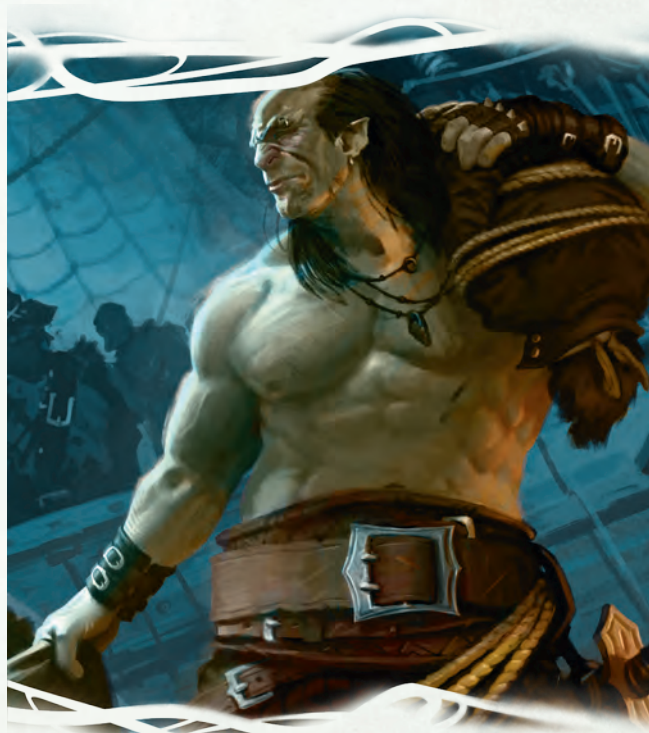




VELISHA, SHAPER OF HIGHBRANCH



ELLIE REDCAP, FATHOM FLEET FIREBRAND



TURK TWO COINS, RUTHLESS KNAVE

Alante of the Five Sacraments

CHARACTER NAME

Cleric 4 (Knowledge)

CLASS & LEVEL

Noble

BACKGROUND

PLAYER NAME

Vampire

RACE

Neutral Good

ALIGNMENT

EXPERIENCE POINTS

+2

PROFICIENCY BONUS

INSPIRATION

10

◇ +0 SAVING THROWS  
○ +0 ATHLETICS

+0

STRENGTH

8

◇ -1 SAVING THROWS  
○ -1 ACROBATICS  
○ -1 SLEIGHT OF HAND  
○ -1 STEALTH

-1

DEXTERITY

14

◇ +2 SAVING THROWS

+2

CONSTITUTION

14

◇ +2 SAVING THROWS  
○ +6 ARCANA  
○ +2 HISTORY  
○ +2 INVESTIGATION  
○ +2 NATURE  
○ +6 RELIGION

+2

INTELLIGENCE

17

◇ +5 SAVING THROWS  
○ +3 ANIMAL HANDLING  
○ +5 INSIGHT  
○ +5 MEDICINE  
○ +5 PERCEPTION  
○ +3 SURVIVAL

+3

WISDOM

14

◇ +4 SAVING THROWS  
○ +2 DECEPTION  
○ +2 INTIMIDATION  
○ +2 PERFORMANCE  
○ +4 PERSUASION

+2

CHARISMA

15

PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

15

ARMOR CLASS

-1

INITIATIVE

30 ft.

SPEED

HIT POINT MAXIMUM 31

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Total 4d8

1d8

HIT DICE

SUCCESSES

FAILURES

DEATH SAVES

PERSONALITY TRAITS

IDEALS

BONDS

FLAWS

NAME

ATK BONUS

DAMAGE/TYPE

Silver mace

+2

1d8 bludgeoning

Light crossbow

+1

1d8 - 1 piercing

Unarmed

-1

1 bludgeoning

Cleric spellcasting:  
Spell save DC 13  
Spell attack modifier +5

Cantrips: light, sacred flame,  
spare the dying, thaumaturgy

Spell slots: 4 1st level, 3 2nd  
level

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

Vampire Features:

Darkvision 60 ft.

Resistance to necrotic damage

Bloodthirst - drain blood from willing creature or target that is grappled, incapacitated, or restrained; melee attack (+2 attack, 1 piercing and 1d6 necrotic damage); target's hit point maximum reduced by necrotic damage dealt until after a long rest

Feast of Blood - when you drain blood with Bloodthirst, your speed increases by 10 feet and gain advantage on Strength and Dexterity checks and saving throws for 1 minute

Noble Features:

Position of Privilege (PH page 135)

Cleric Features (PH page 57):

Spellcasting

Turn undead (Wisdom save DC 13)

Knowledge Domain Features (PH page 59):

Blessings of Knowledge (already calculated)

Channel Divinity: Knowledge of the Ages

(action, choose a skill or tool, gain proficiency for 10 minutes)

FEATURES & TRAITS

Languages: Common, Merfolk, Siren, Vampire

Tools: Chess (gaming set)

Armor: Light armor, medium armor, shields

Weapons: All simple weapons

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

Silver mace, steel shield with a dragon rampant, finely etched breastplate, light crossbow, 20 bolts, silver signet ring with a drop of her past human blood, worn ivory rook (piece of a chess set), holy symbol (focus), backpack, blanket, 10 candles, tinderbox, alms box, 2 blocks of incense, censer, vestments, waterskin

Alante belongs to the Order of the Five Sacraments, a sect of the church that believes in establishing a trade relationship with the Sun Empire. She is opposed other factions within the Legion of Dusk, who seek to conquer and subjugate the Sun Empire. Her kind nature ensured that she was posted at the Conqueror's Foothold to administer last rites to prisoners about to die. However, she spied upon a secret plan set in motion by Vona, the Butcher of Magan to secure a powerful artifact known as the Hierophant's Chalice from its location deep in the interior of Ixalan at the Temple of Aclazotz. The artifact is said to have been carried by Arguel, a prophet known for his fanciful and dark visions, to that place for some unknown purpose. Seeking to gain favor in her order and in opposition to the Adanto sect, she stole the treasure map that leads to the location of the temple. Under cover of night, she freed the prisoners awaiting final judgment to help her navigate the terrain and retrieve the artifact for her superiors before Vona's forces can obtain it for their use.

EQUIPMENT & CHARACTER NOTES



## Artinoq, Atzocan Archer

CHARACTER NAME

Ranger (Beast Master) Soldier

CLASS & LEVEL

BACKGROUND

PLAYER NAME

Human

Lawful Good

RACE

ALIGNMENT

EXPERIENCE POINTS

+2

PROFICIENCY BONUS

INSPIRATION

14

◆ +4 SAVING THROWS  
○ +4 ATHLETICS

+2

STRENGTH

16

◆ +5 SAVING THROWS  
○ +3 ACROBATICS  
○ +3 SLEIGHT OF HAND  
● +5 STEALTH

+3

DEXTERITY

13

◆ +1 SAVING THROWS

+1

CONSTITUTION

9

◆ -1 SAVING THROWS  
○ -1 ARCANA  
○ -1 HISTORY  
○ -1 INVESTIGATION  
○ -1 NATURE  
○ -1 RELIGION

-1

INTELLIGENCE

15

◆ +2 SAVING THROWS  
● +4 ANIMAL HANDLING  
○ +2 INSIGHT  
○ +2 MEDICINE  
● +4 PERCEPTION  
○ +4 SURVIVAL

+2

WISDOM

11

◆ +0 SAVING THROWS  
○ +0 DECEPTION  
○ +0 INTIMIDATION  
○ +0 PERFORMANCE  
○ +0 PERSUASION

+0

CHARISMA

14

PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

16

ARMOR CLASS

+3

INITIATIVE

30 ft.

SPEED

HIT POINT MAXIMUM 32

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Total 4d10

1d10

HIT DICE

SUCCESSSES

FAILURES

DEATH SAVES

PERSONALITY TRAITS

IDEALS

BONDS

FLAWS

NAME

ATK BONUS

DAMAGE/TYPE

Jade longsword

+4

1d8 (1d10) + 2 slashing

Feathered Longbow

+7

1d8 + 3 piercing

Unarmed

+1

1 + 1 bludgeoning

Ranger spellcasting:

Spell save DC 12

Spell attack modifier +4

Spells known: cure wounds, hunter's mark, speak with animals

Spell slots: 3 1st level

Sharkbait (velociraptor): AC 13, hp 16, bite +4 to hit (1d6 + 2 piercing damage), claw +4 to hit (1d4 + 2 slashing damage), multiattack (action to use bite and claw), pack tactics (advantage on attack roll when allies are within 5 feet of target), Perception +3

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

Solider Features:

Military Rank (PH page 140)

Ranger Features (PH page 91):

Spellcasting

Favored Enemy (goblins, merfolk)

Natural Explorer (forest)

Archery Fighting Style (already calculated)

Primeval Awareness

Beast Master Features (PH

page 93):

Ranger's Companion

(velociraptor named Sharkbait; takes its turn on your initiative)

FEATURES & TRAITS

Languages: Common, Merfolk

Tools: Dice (gaming set), vehicles (land)

Armor: Light armor, medium armor, shields

Weapons: Simple weapons, martial weapons

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

Jade longsword (trophy from merfolk tribe), feather-adorned longbow, 30 arrows, chain shirt, rank insignia (second commander), mummified goblin hand, backpack, bedroll, mess kit, tinderbox, 10 torches, waterskin, 50 feet of hempen rope

Artinoq serves as a scout in the Emperor's Vanguard under the command of his father Rouxil. A natural leader and selfless soldier, he has been eager to show his father that he is worthy of one day taking over his command once he leaves the field. However, they were captured during a vicious counterattack by the Legion of Dusk while on their last scouting mission to Conqueror's Foothold. Sentenced to death, all seemed lost until Alante appeared and made a deal to free them. Artinoq desires peace much like his father, but his future role in a stable region is unclear as he's spent his young career serving the Sun Empire in battle. He has a velociraptor beast companion named Sharkbait that has served with him for years in the field.

EQUIPMENT & CHARACTER NOTES

Ellie Redcap, Fathom Fleet Firebrand

CHARACTER NAME

Sorcerer (Wild Magic)

CLASS & LEVEL

Sailor

BACKGROUND

PLAYER NAME

Human

RACE

Neutral

ALIGNMENT

EXPERIENCE POINTS

+2

PROFICIENCY BONUS

INSPIRATION

13

- ◇ +1 SAVING THROWS
- +3 ATHLETICS

+1

STRENGTH

14

- ◇ +2 SAVING THROWS
- +2 ACROBATICS
- +2 SLEIGHT OF HAND
- +2 STEALTH

+2

DEXTERITY

14

- ◇ +4 SAVING THROWS

+2

CONSTITUTION

12

- ◇ +1 SAVING THROWS
- +1 ARCANA
- +1 HISTORY
- +1 INVESTIGATION
- +1 NATURE
- +1 RELIGION

+1

INTELLIGENCE

10

- ◇ +0 SAVING THROWS
- +0 ANIMAL HANDLING
- +0 INSIGHT
- +0 MEDICINE
- +2 PERCEPTION
- +0 SURVIVAL

+0

WISDOM

16

- ◇ +5 SAVING THROWS
- +3 DECEPTION
- +5 INTIMIDATION
- +3 PERFORMANCE
- +5 PERSUASION

+3

CHARISMA

12

PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

12

ARMOR CLASS

+2

INITIATIVE

30 ft.

SPEED

HIT POINT MAXIMUM 26

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Total 4d6

1d6

HIT DICE

SUCCESSES

FAILURES

DEATH SAVES

PERSONALITY TRAITS

IDEALS

BONDS

FLAWS

NAME

ATK BONUS

DAMAGE/TYPE

Obsidian daggers

+4

1d4 + 2 piercing

Light crossbow

+4

1d8 + 2 piercing

Unarmed

+1

1 + 1 bludgeoning

Sorcerer spellcasting:

Spell save DC 13

Spell attack modifier +5

Cantrips: fire bolt, mage hand, mending, message, prestidigitation

Spells known:

1st - burning hands, false life, mage armor

2nd - misty step, scorching ray

Spell slots: 4 1st level, 3 2nd level

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

Sailor Features:

Ship's Passage (PH page 139)

Sorcerer Features (PH page 100):

Spellcasting

Font of Magic (4 Sorcery Points)

Metamagic: Empowered Spell, Quicken Spell

Wild Magic Features (PH page 103):

Wild Magic Surge (DM initiated d20 roll; on a 1, roll on Wild Magic Surge table)

Tides of Chaos (gain advantage on one attack, check, or saving throw; regain on a long rest)

FEATURES & TRAITS

Languages: Common

Weapons: Daggers, darts, slings, quarterstaves, light crossbows

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

Two obsidian daggers, light crossbow, 20 bolts, broken compass (focus), backpack, bedroll, mess kit, tinderbox, 10 torches, waterskin, 50 feet of hempen rope

Ellie was the first mate and spelljack aboard the Relentless. She was known for her acumen at sea and her mysterious arcane tattoos inscribed with flame sigils. Ever the opportunist, she rose quickly through the ranks of the crew and was planning a mutiny to oust the captain due to his gross incompetence. His last foolish order saw the pirates in battle with a galleon much too big for their ship, and the goblins in their zeal overloaded a firecannon and blew the ship up. Ellie survived the explosion but was plunged into the sea, and washed ashore with Turk near Conqueror's Foothold. Both were immediately arrested for piracy against the Legion of Dusk, and were due to be executed before being freed by Alante. Ellie brokered a deal – she would help Alante retrieve her artifact, and then she'd be granted a captured ship as payment for her efforts.

EQUIPMENT & CHARACTER NOTES



## Rouxil, Emperor's Vanguard

CHARACTER NAME

Fighter (Champion)

CLASS & LEVEL

Human

RACE

Folk Hero

BACKGROUND

Lawful Good

ALIGNMENT

PLAYER NAME

EXPERIENCE POINTS

+2

PROFICIENCY BONUS

INSPIRATION

16

+3

STRENGTH

- ◆ +5 SAVING THROWS
- +5 ATHLETICS

13

+1

DEXTERITY

- ◆ +1 SAVING THROWS
- +1 ACROBATICS
- +1 SLEIGHT OF HAND
- +1 STEALTH

16

+3

CONSTITUTION

- ◆ +5 SAVING THROWS

9

-1

INTELLIGENCE

- ◆ -1 SAVING THROWS
- -1 ARCANA
- -1 HISTORY
- -1 INVESTIGATION
- -1 NATURE
- -1 RELIGION

11

+0

WISDOM

- ◆ +0 SAVING THROWS
- +2 ANIMAL HANDLING
- +0 INSIGHT
- +0 MEDICINE
- +2 PERCEPTION
- +2 SURVIVAL

14

+2

CHARISMA

- ◆ +2 SAVING THROWS
- +2 DECEPTION
- +2 INTIMIDATION
- +2 PERFORMANCE
- +2 PERSUASION

12

PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

18

ARMOR CLASS

+1

INITIATIVE

30 ft.

SPEED

HIT POINT MAXIMUM 40

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Total 4d10

1d10

HIT DICE

SUCCESSSES

FAILURES

DEATH SAVES

PERSONALITY TRAITS

IDEALS

BONDS

FLAWS

NAME

ATK BONUS

DAMAGE/TYPE

Ancestral battle axe

+5

1d8 (1d10) + 3 slashing

Javelin

+5

1d6 + 3 piercing

Unarmed

+3

1 + 3 bludgeoning

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

Folk Hero Features:

Rustic Hospitality (PH page 131)

Fighter Features (PH page 71):

Defense Fighting Style (already calculated)

Second Wind (bonus action to regain 1d10 + 4 hit points, regain on short or long rest)

Action Surge (take an additional action on your turn, regain on short or long rest)

Champion Features (PH page 72):

Improved Critical (critical hit on a 19 or 20)

FEATURES & TRAITS

Languages: Common

Tools: Woodcutter's tools, vehicles (land)

Armor: All armor, shields

Weapons: Simple weapons, martial weapons

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

Ancestral battle axe, 4 javelins, feathered shield, breastplate, writ of Emperor's commendation (to be given by you to a favored soldier), wood for whittling, small carving knives, iron pot, shovel, backpack, bedroll, mess kit, tinderbox, 10 torches, waterskin, 50 feet of hempen rope

Rouxil and his son Artinoq are a part of the Emperor's Vanguard, an elite fighting force that has been fighting skirmishes against the Legion of Dusk ever since their arrival. On their last battle, both of them were the sole survivors from their scouting patrol meant to assess the perimeter defenses of Conqueror's Foothold. They were placed in prison and sentenced to death. Alante heard of their battle acumen, and decided to free them to help her. Rouxil wants Alante to succeed and have her order usurp influence of the region. He believes that if the Order of the Five Sacraments is able to convince the rest of the Legion of Dusk that a reciprocal arrangement with the Sun Empire is beneficial, that he will be able to bring an end to the conflict in this region of Ixalan.

EQUIPMENT & CHARACTER NOTES

Turk Two Coins, Ruthless Knave

CHARACTER NAME

Rogue (Thief)

CLASS & LEVEL

Orc

RACE

Criminal

BACKGROUND

Chaotic Neutral

ALIGNMENT

PLAYER NAME

EXPERIENCE POINTS

+2

PROFICIENCY BONUS

INSPIRATION

16

+3

STRENGTH

- ◇ +3 SAVING THROWS
- +7 ATHLETICS

16

+3

DEXTERITY

- ◇ +5 SAVING THROWS
- +3 ACROBATICS
- +5 SLEIGHT OF HAND
- +7 STEALTH

14

+2

CONSTITUTION

- ◇ +2 SAVING THROWS

10

+0

INTELLIGENCE

- ◇ +2 SAVING THROWS
- +0 ARCANA
- +0 HISTORY
- +0 INVESTIGATION
- +0 NATURE
- +0 RELIGION

8

-1

WISDOM

- ◇ -1 SAVING THROWS
- -1 ANIMAL HANDLING
- -1 INSIGHT
- -1 MEDICINE
- +1 PERCEPTION
- -1 SURVIVAL

12

+1

CHARISMA

- ◇ +1 SAVING THROWS
- +3 DECEPTION
- +3 INTIMIDATION
- +3 PERFORMANCE
- +1 PERSUASION

11

PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

14

ARMOR CLASS

+3

INITIATIVE

30 ft.

SPEED

HIT POINT MAXIMUM 31

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Total 4d8

1d8

HIT DICE

SUCCESSSES

FAILURES

DEATH SAVES

PERSONALITY TRAITS

IDEALS

BONDS

FLAWS

NAME

ATK BONUS

DAMAGE/TYPE

Old World rapier

+5

1d8 + 3 piercing

Hand crossbow

+5

1d6 + 3 piercing

Unarmed

+3

1 + 3 bludgeoning

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

Orc Features:

Darkvision 60 ft.

Relentless Endurance (when reduced to 0 hit points and not killed, remain at 1 hit point; regain on long rest)

Savage Attacks (roll an extra damage die on critical hits with melee attacks)

Criminal Features:

Criminal Contact: Fence (PH page 129)

Rogue Features (PH page 95):

Expertise (already calculated)

Sneak Attack (if you have advantage on an attack, deal 2d6 damage with finesse or ranged weapons)

Cunning Action (use Dash, Disengage, or Hide as a bonus action)

Thief Features (PH page 97):

Fast Hands (use Cunning Action to make Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks, disarm traps, open locks, or take Use an Object action)

Second-Story Work (climbing doesn't cost extra movement, +3 feet to running jumps)

FEATURES & TRAITS

Languages: Common, Orc, Thieves' Cant

Tools: Dice (gaming set), thieves' tools

Armor: Light armor

Weapons: Simple weapons, hand crossbows, longswords, rapiers, shortswords

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

Old World filigree rapier, hand crossbow, 20 bolts, leather armor, leather cup with 6 knuckle bone dice (gaming set), backpack, bag of 1,000 ball bearings, crowbar, 10 feet of string, bell, 5 candles, 10 pitons, hooded lantern, 2 flasks of oil, tinderbox, waterskin, 50 feet of hempen rope

Turk loves the life of a pirate, and particularly relishes his role as one of the Fathom Fleet's lead boarders, assigned to suppress resistance on captured vessels by intimidation or force. He lives for plunder, and since his job is so risky, he often gets a prime share of the booty. However, his last mission attacking a Legion of Dusk galleon went terribly wrong, and he was thrown from his ship the Relentless by a malfunctioning firecannon explosion. He and the first mate washed ashore near Conqueror's Foothold, where he was immediately recognized by soldiers he had once encountered on a previous raid. The two of them were thrown in prison awaiting execution until Alante showed up to free them to help her navigate through the interior to find an artifact. Turk knows that there's got to be much more treasure than just some chalice, and he's determined to claim a large enough share so he can live out the rest of his life in debauchery.

EQUIPMENT & CHARACTER NOTES



Velisha, Shaper of Highbranch

CHARACTER NAME

Druid 4 (Circle of the Land)

CLASS & LEVEL

Merfolk (Green)

RACE

Outlander

BACKGROUND

Chaotic Good

ALIGNMENT

PLAYER NAME

EXPERIENCE POINTS

+2

PROFICIENCY BONUS

INSPIRATION

9

◇ -1 SAVING THROWS  
○ -1 ATHLETICS

-1

STRENGTH

12

◇ +1 SAVING THROWS  
○ +1 ACROBATICS  
○ +1 SLEIGHT OF HAND  
○ +1 STEALTH

+1

DEXTERITY

14

◇ +2 SAVING THROWS

+2

CONSTITUTION

10

◇ +2 SAVING THROWS  
○ +0 ARCANA  
○ +0 HISTORY  
○ +0 INVESTIGATION  
○ +2 NATURE  
○ +0 RELIGION

+0

INTELLIGENCE

18

◇ +6 SAVING THROWS  
○ +6 ANIMAL HANDLING  
○ +6 INSIGHT  
○ +4 MEDICINE  
○ +6 PERCEPTION  
○ +6 SURVIVAL

+4

WISDOM

14

◇ +2 SAVING THROWS  
○ +2 DECEPTION  
○ +2 INTIMIDATION  
○ +2 PERFORMANCE  
○ +2 PERSUASION

+2

CHARISMA

16

PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

13

ARMOR CLASS

+1

INITIATIVE

30 ft.

SPEED

HIT POINT MAXIMUM 31

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Total 4d8

1d8

HIT DICE

SUCCESSSES

FAILURES

DEATH SAVES

PERSONALITY TRAITS

IDEALS

BONDS

FLAWS

NAME

ATK BONUS

DAMAGE/TYPE

Jade staff

+1

1d6 - 1 bludgeoning

Sling

+3

1d4 + 1 bludgeoning

Unarmed

-1

1 bludgeoning

Druid spellcasting:  
Spell save DC 14  
Spell attack modifier +6

Cantrips: druidcraft, guidance,  
resistance, shillelagh, thorn  
whip

Spell slots: 4 1st level, 3 2nd  
level

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

Merfolk (Green) Features:  
Swim speed 30 ft.  
Amphibious (breathe both air and  
water)  
Bonus druid cantrip

Outlander Features:  
Wanderer (PH page 136)

Druid Features (PH page 65):  
Spellcasting  
Wild shape (max. CR 1/4, no  
swimming or flying)

Circle of the Land Features (PH  
page 68):  
Bonus druid cantrip  
Natural recovery (two levels worth of  
spell slots per short rest)  
Circle spells - barkskin, spider climb

FEATURES & TRAITS

Languages: Common, Druidic, Merfolk, Orc,  
Vampire

Tools: Herbalism kit, pipes (musical instrument)

Armor: Light armor, medium armor, shields (non  
metal only)

Weapons: Clubs, daggers, darts, javelins,  
maces, quarterstaves, scimitars, sickles, slings,  
spears

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

Jade armor (studded leather), jade staff (quarterstaff), sling, 20 sling stones, Highbranch tribal amulet (druidic focus), regisaur claw (trophy), hunting trap, pipes (musical instrument), herbalism kit, backpack, bedroll, mess kit, tinderbox, 10 torches, waterskin, 50 feet of hempen rope

Velisha is a shaper, a weaver of nature magic. Her tribe dwells in a forested community known as Highbranch, and she serves as a guide. In this role, she was employed by a Dusk Legion lieutenant under Vona's command to escort a wayward patrol back to Conqueror's Foothold. When she arrived, the lieutenant claimed that some of the soldiers she had been escorting had stolen from them. After attempting to fight off the soldiers and escape, she was captured and sentenced to death. Alante freed her from her fate and told her of what she needed done in exchange. Velisha knows the interior well, and has heard that the Temple of Aclazotz contains a dark unnatural force. She means to expel it.

EQUIPMENT & CHARACTER NOTES

# Comic: Port Nyanzaru

Artist Jason Thompson's latest detailed map drops a literal party of adventurers into Chult's carousing Port Nyanzaru!

Comic artist, author and illustrator **Jason Thompson** currently runs a D&D campaign for his Monday night gaming group in San Francisco. His works include the Eisner-nominated *Manga: The Complete Guide*, *King of RPGs*, *H.P. Lovecraft's The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, and the tabletop game *Mangaka: The Fast & Furious Game of Drawing Comics*. His favorite things to draw are landscapes, plants, reptiles and amphibians.





(Select to view)

**HI-RES VERSION HERE**

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## DUNGEONS & DOODLES

Last issue, we offered the finished pieces from the inaugural Dungeons & Doodles episode of the *Dragon+ livestream*. We had such a blast, that we wanted to get back to the literal drawing board! This most recent episode has now been archived if you wish to watch the process in action, plus here are the finished pieces—enjoy!

**Dungeons & Doodles 1**

**Dungeons & Doodles 2**

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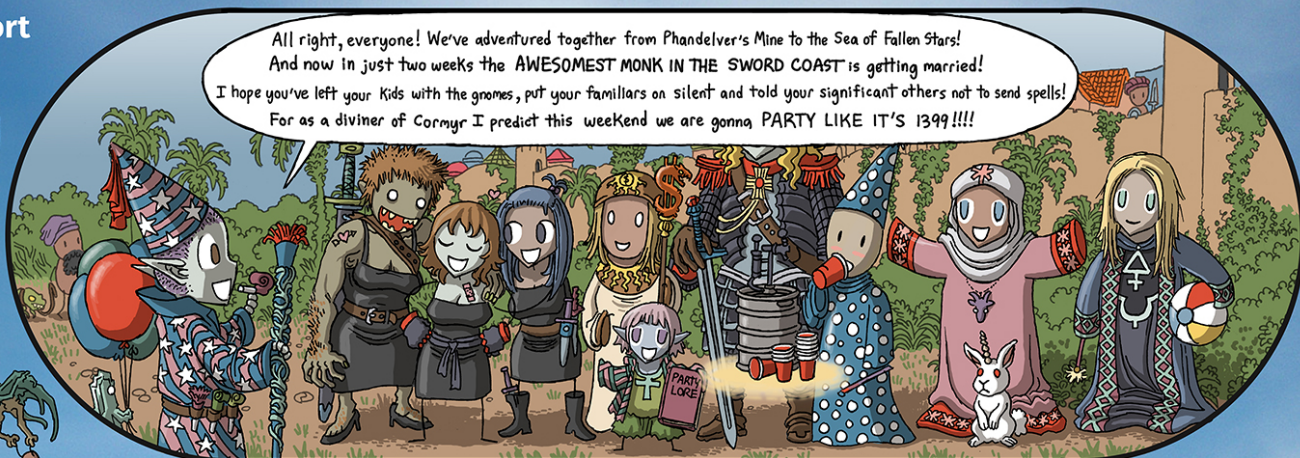
BACK TO TOP



Just six seconds from Waterdeep by teleport  
lie the beaches and palm trees of...

# PORT NYANZARU

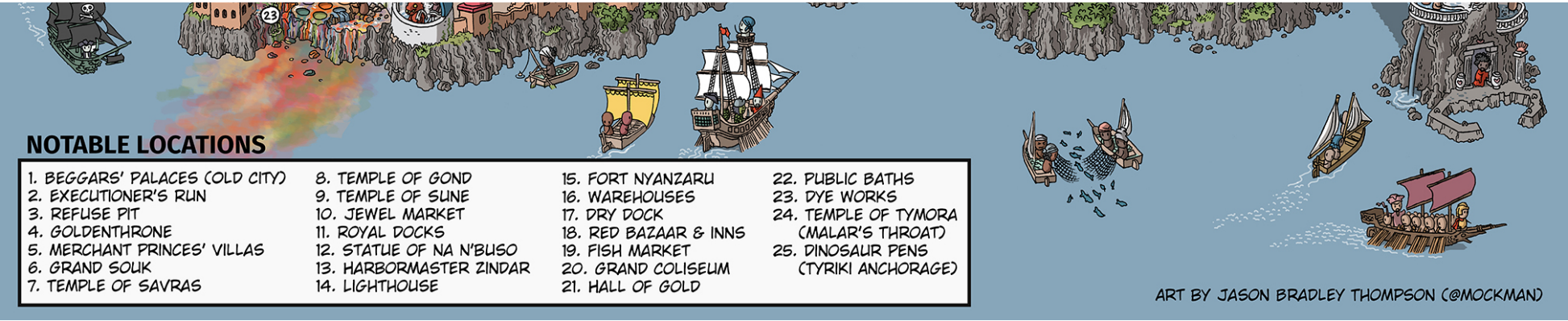
*Carousing Capital of Faerûn*

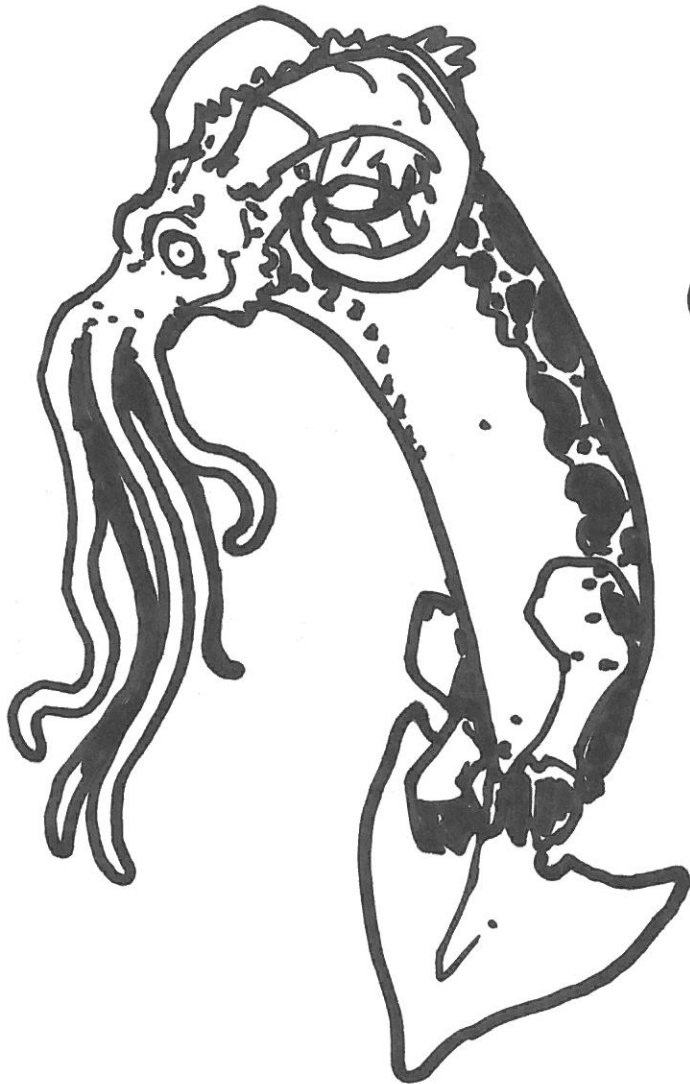


As explored in *Tomb of Annihilation* by Christopher Perkins, Will Doyle and Steve Winter









SQUID  
GOAT

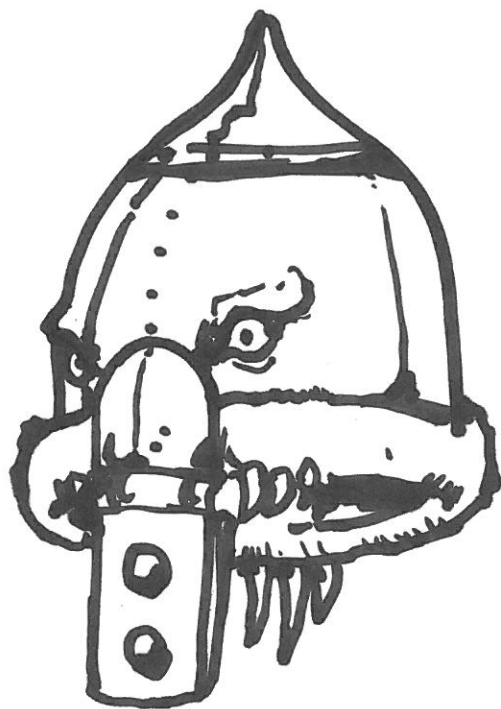
RW



CARL  
SNEAKBREATH

DRAGON  
THIEF

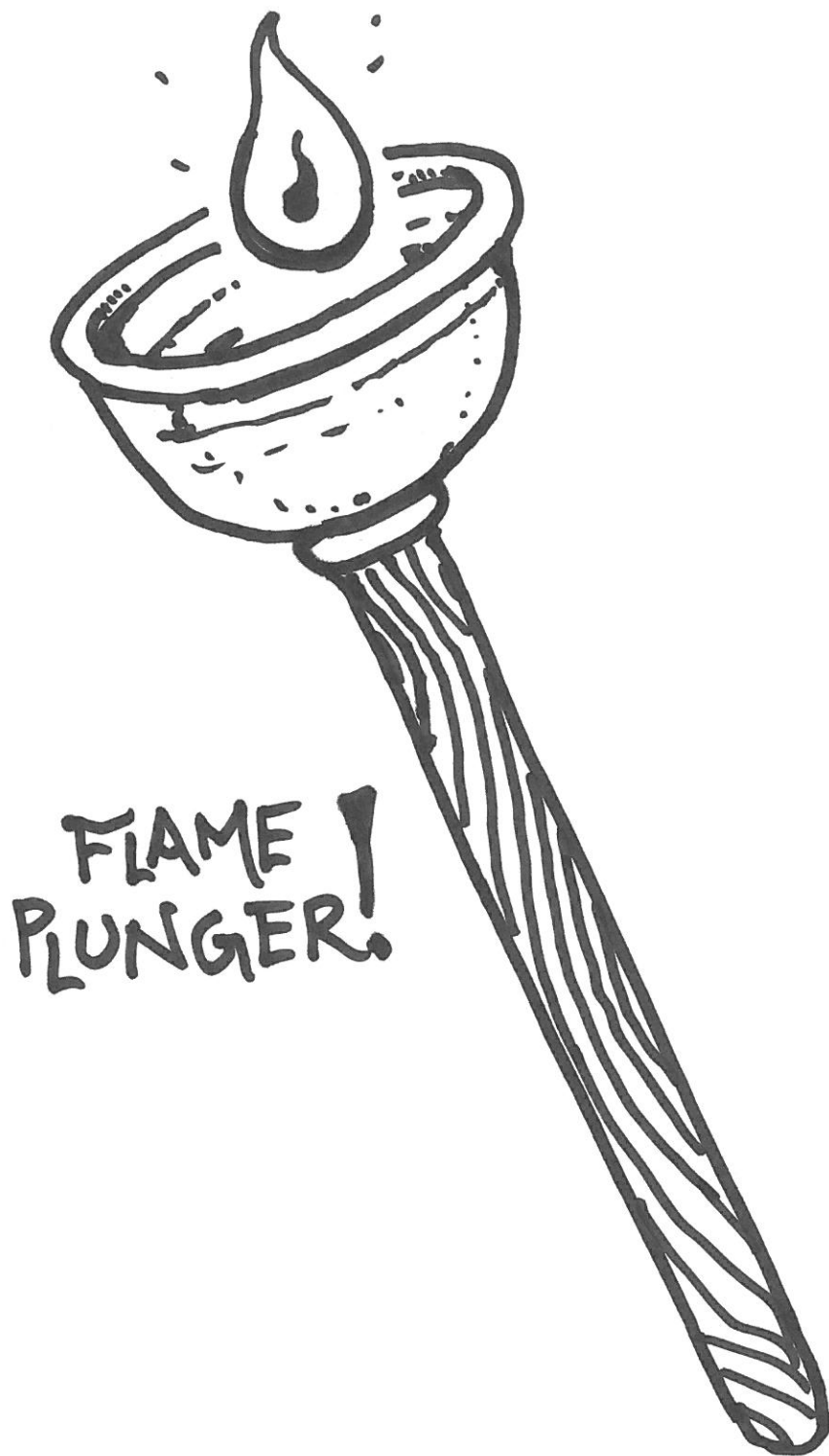




MIMIC  
HELMET

RW













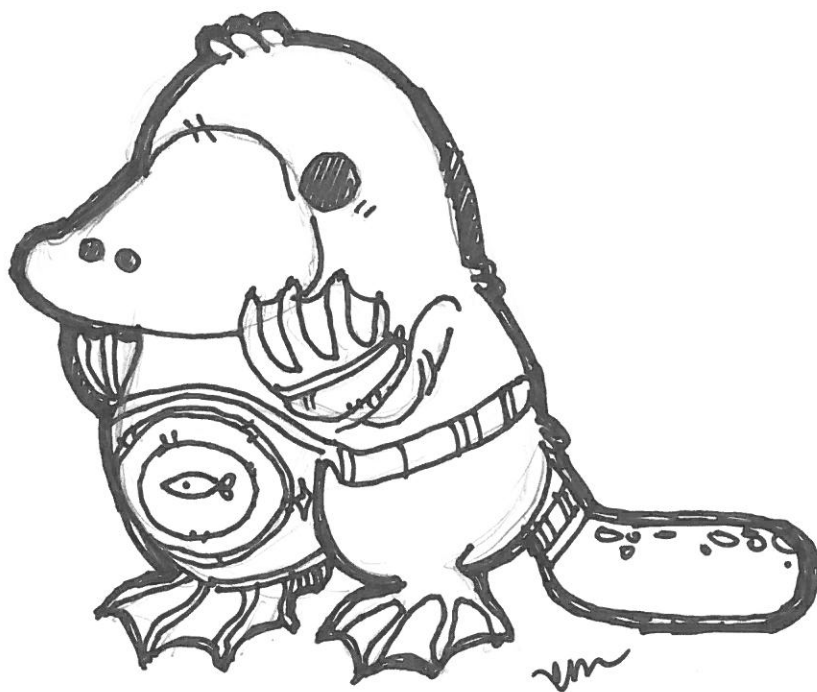






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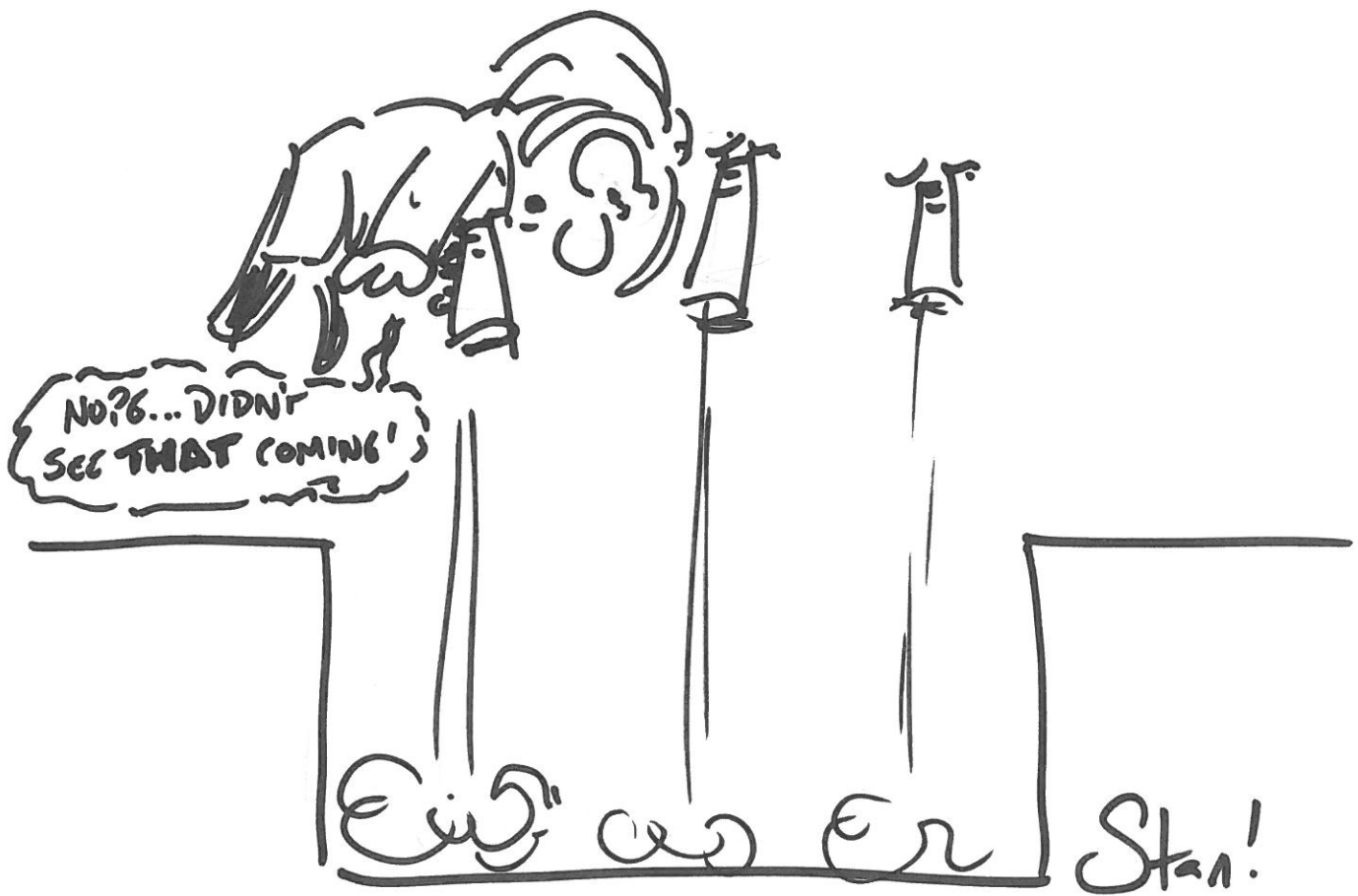


WHO'S GONNA  
"BREAK" WHO?



Stan!





FLYING FISH FEET!





FLAME-TOOTH PICK

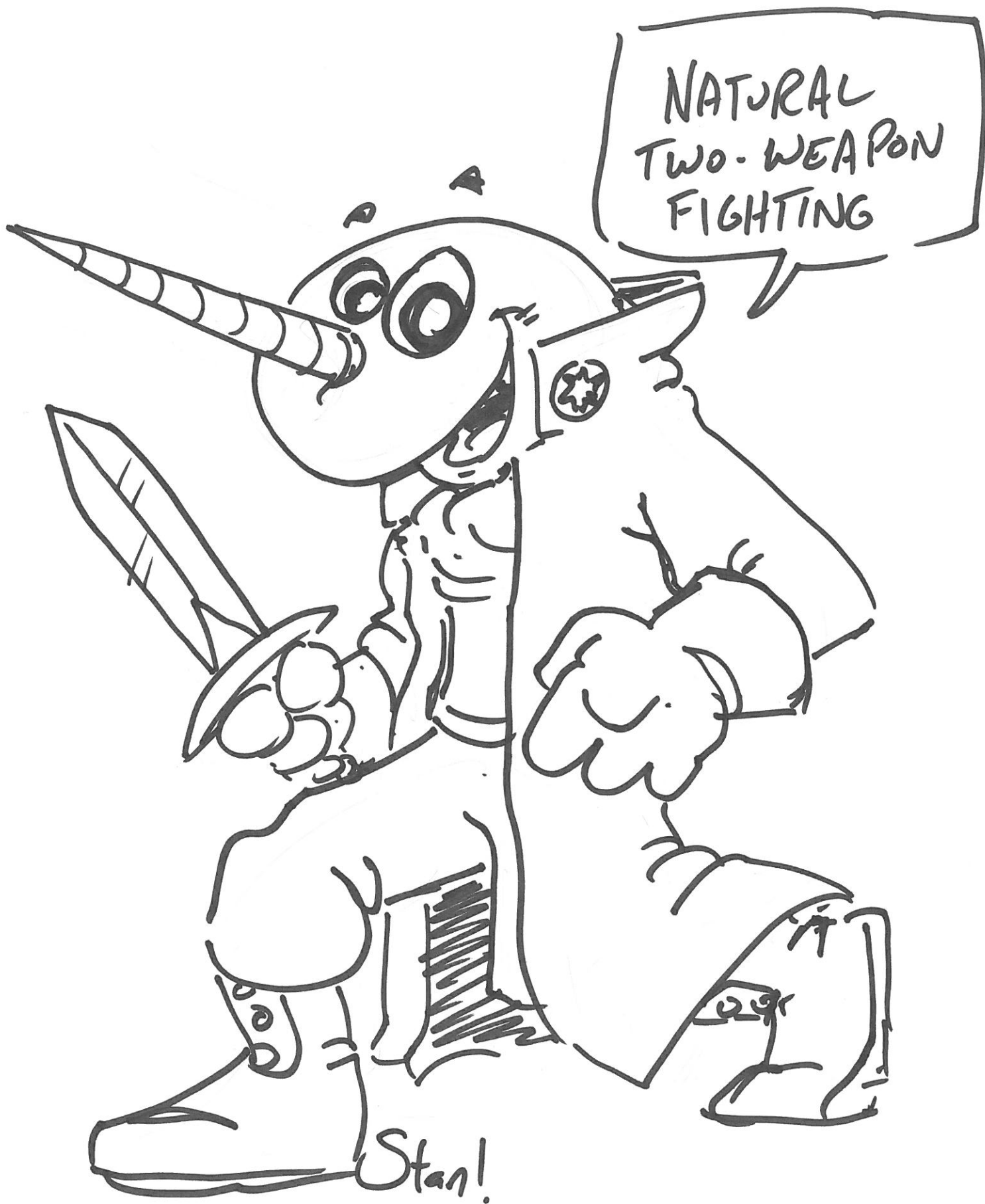


Stan!



Stan!

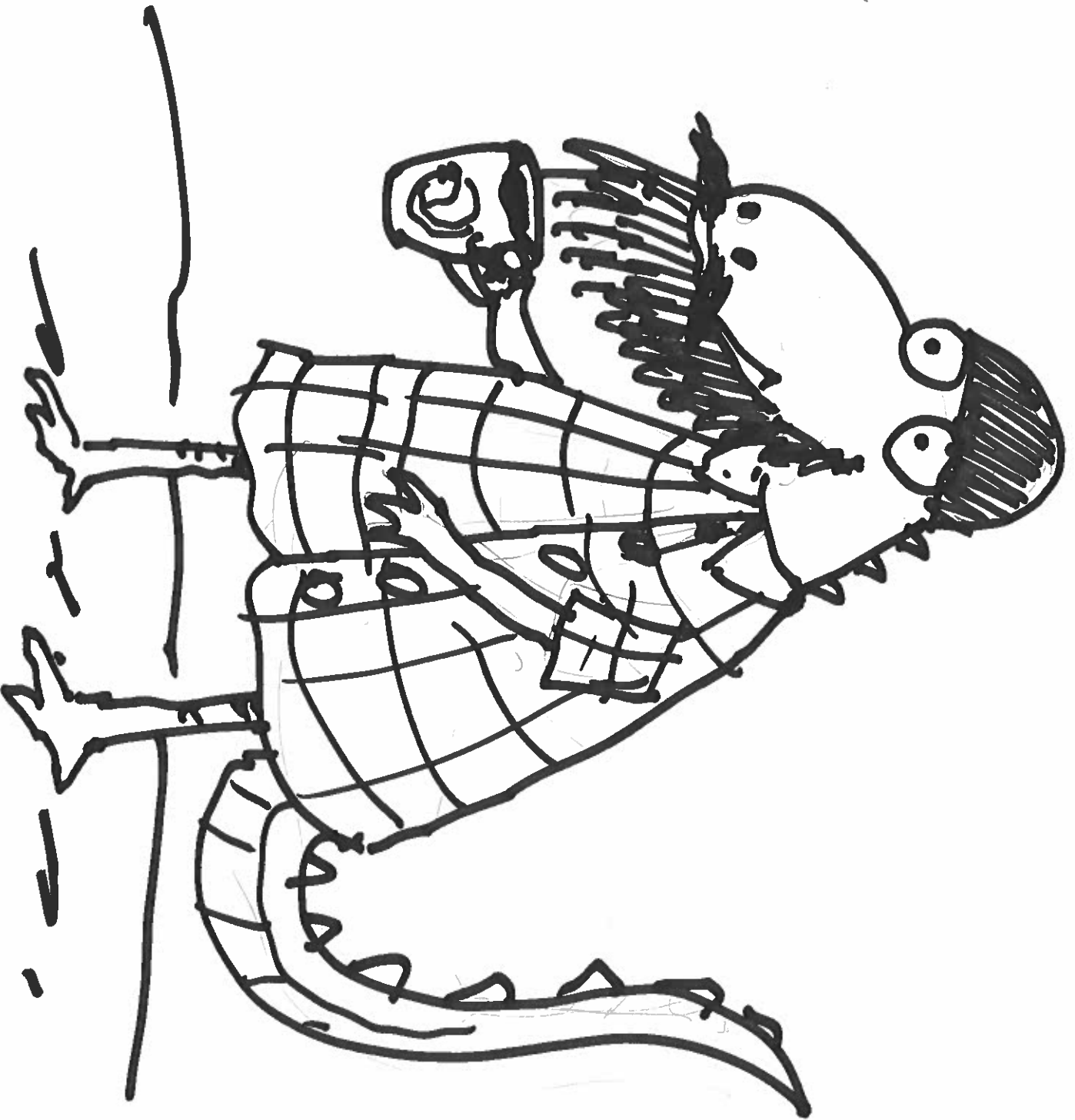
FLAME-BLANKET





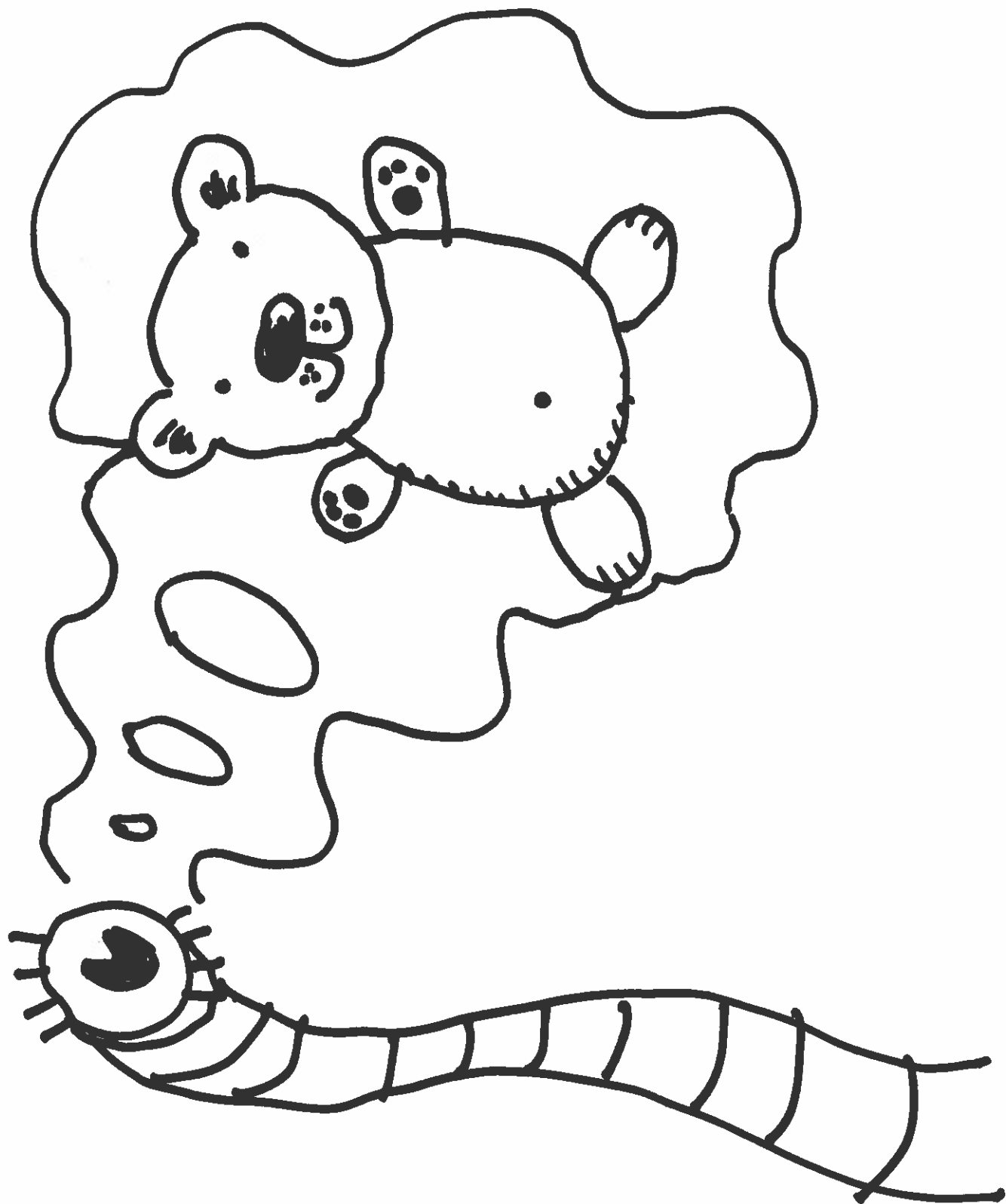


Clown  
Snot  
Pun  
Today  
Moss  
Pest  
Magnetic



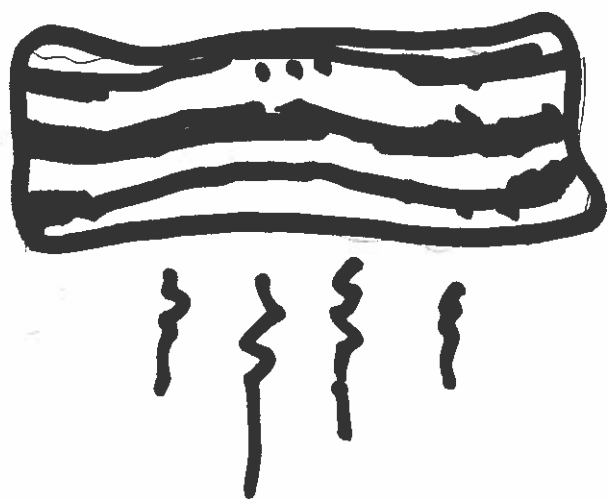
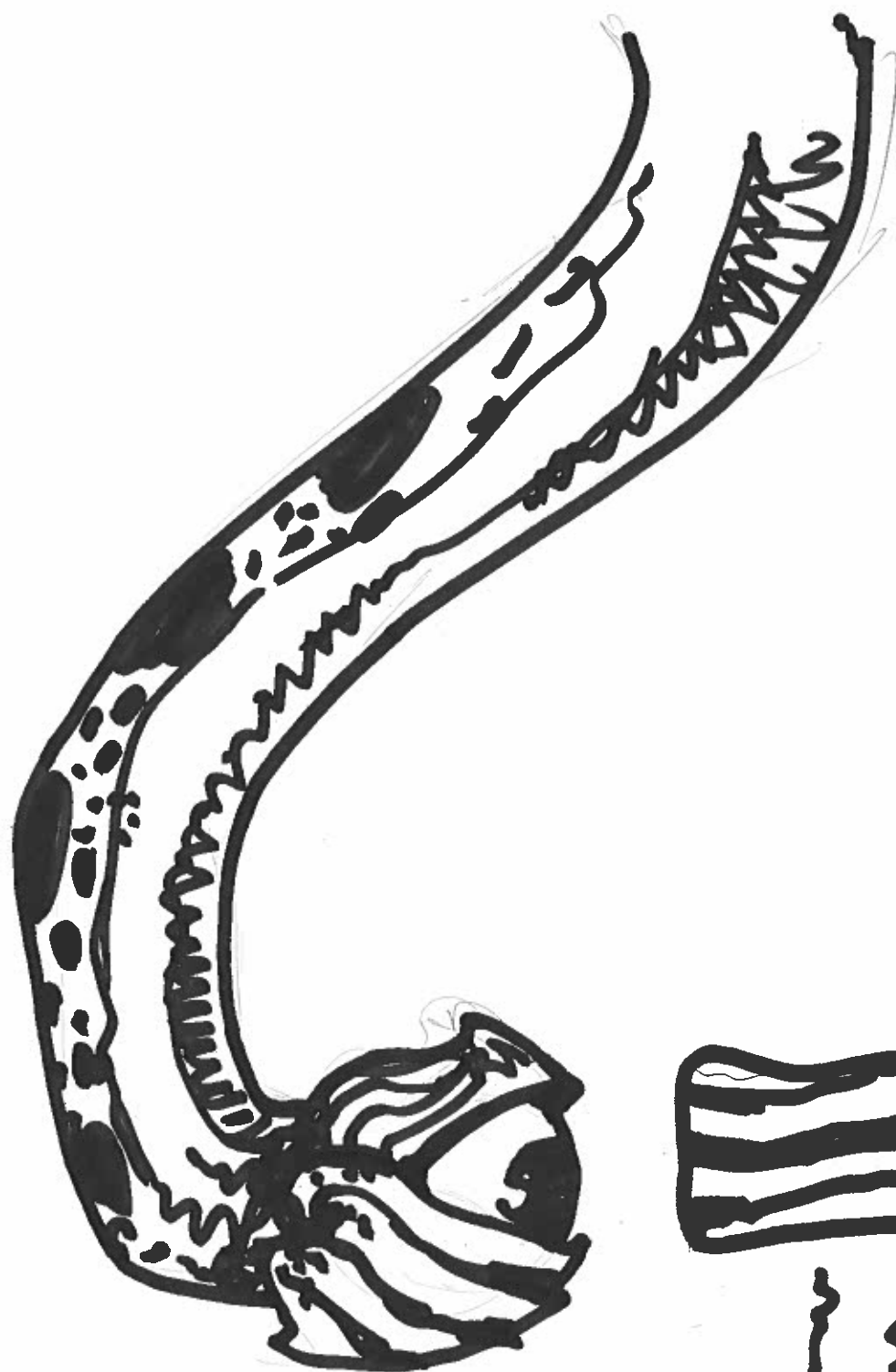








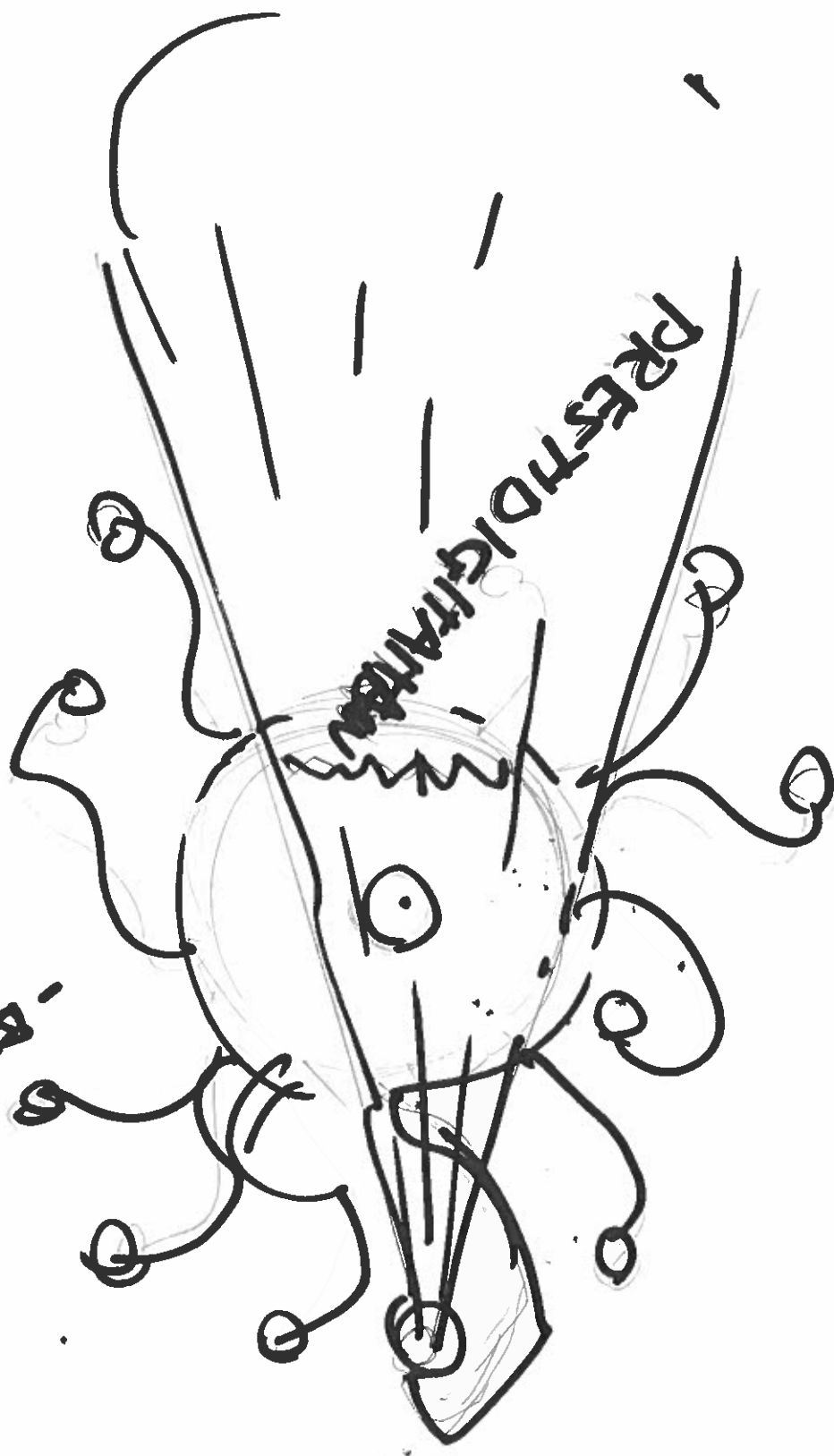






BE CLEAN!  
INTEGRAL

PRESTIGIOUS

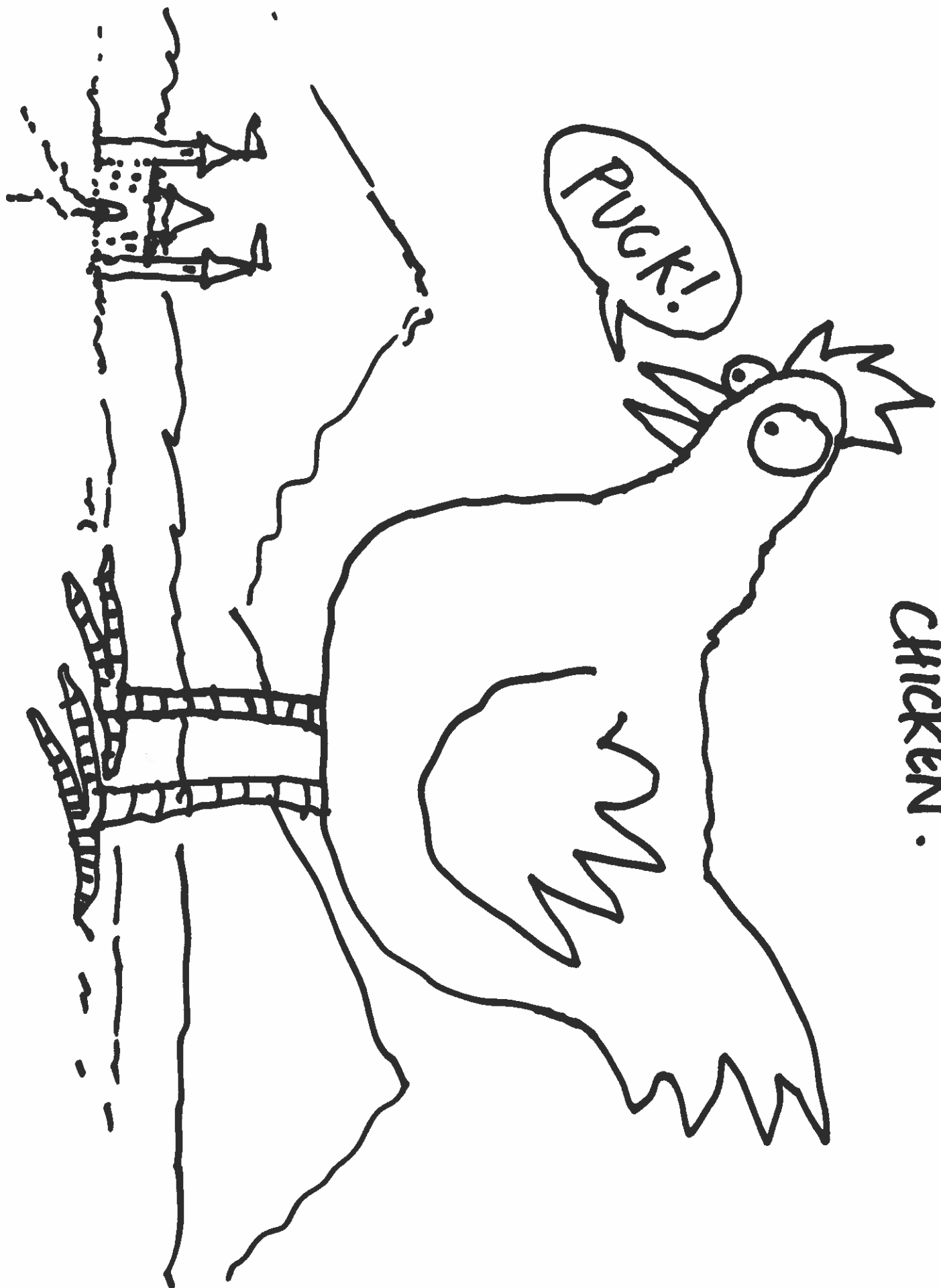




BIGBY'S  
STINKY  
TOE!



# BIGBY'S GIANT CHICKEN.



BIGBY'S  
HAM  
↓

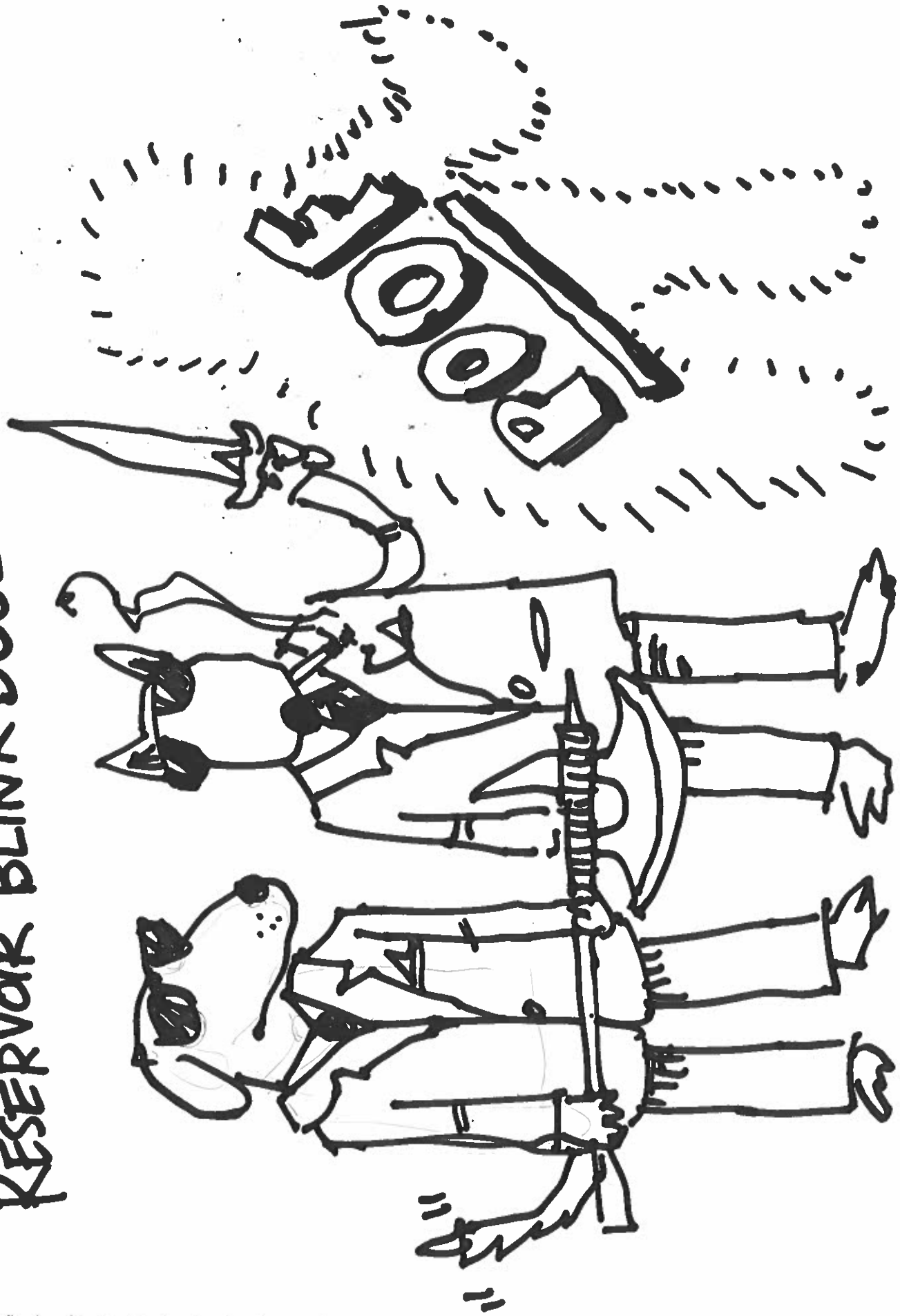




FOR STAN! GANBATTLE!  
GET BETTER!

RESERVOIR BLINK DOGS

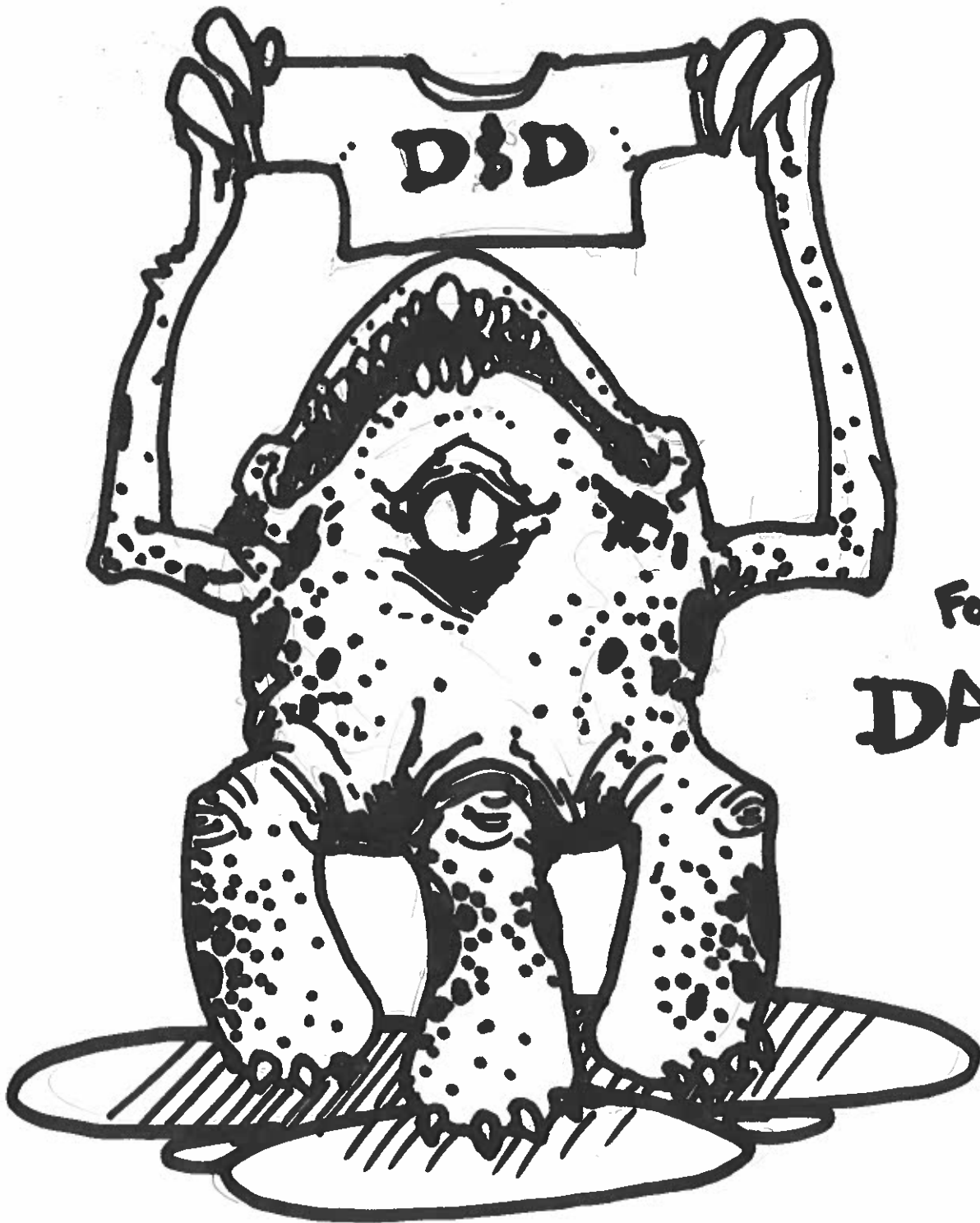
Reservoir  
Blink Dogs









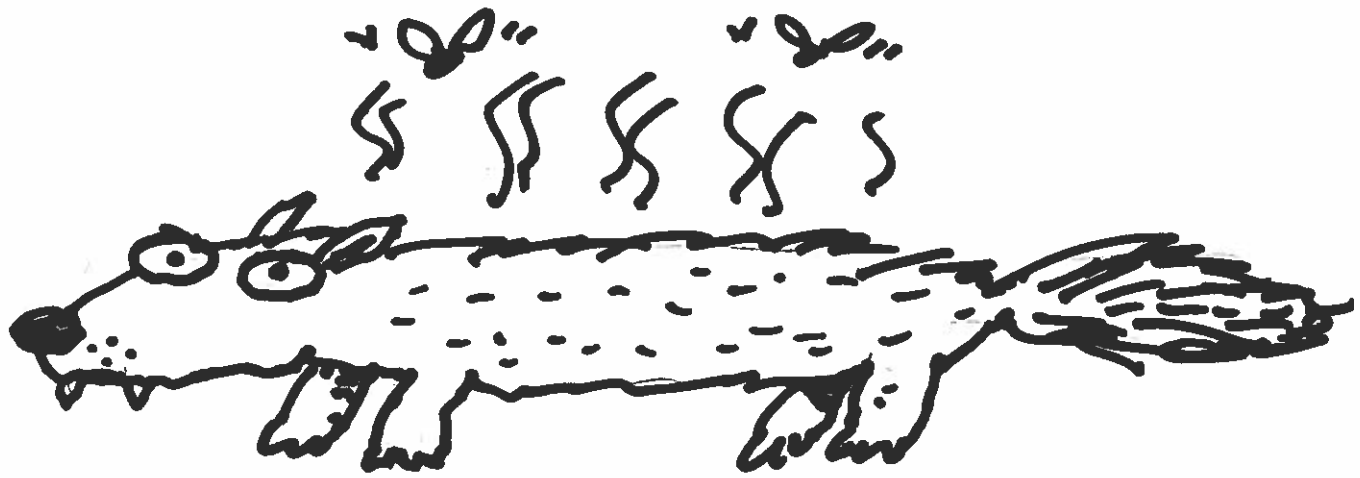


FOR  
DANI





# DUNGEONS & DOODLES!

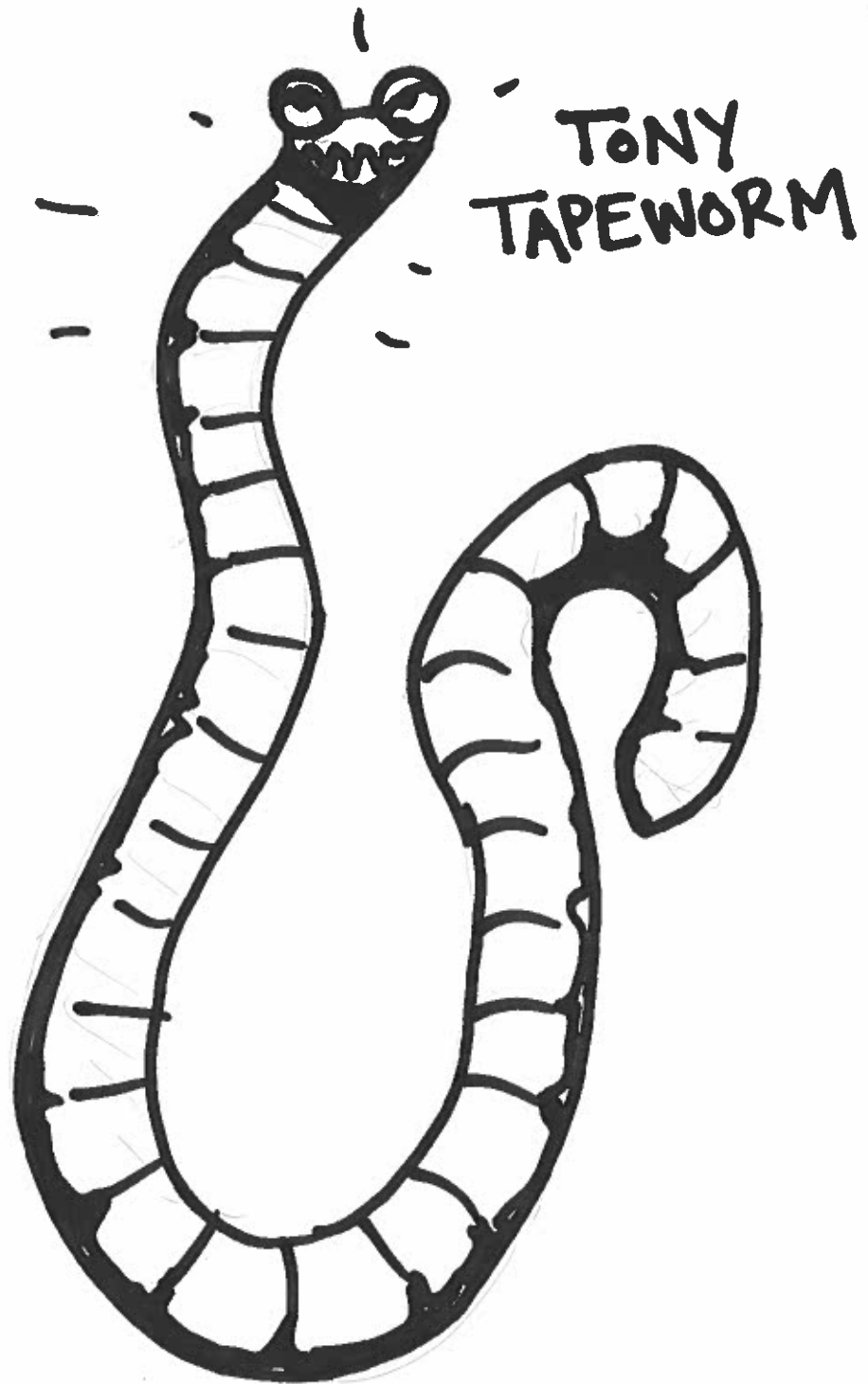


STINKY, GRUMPY WEASEL



# TAPE WORM

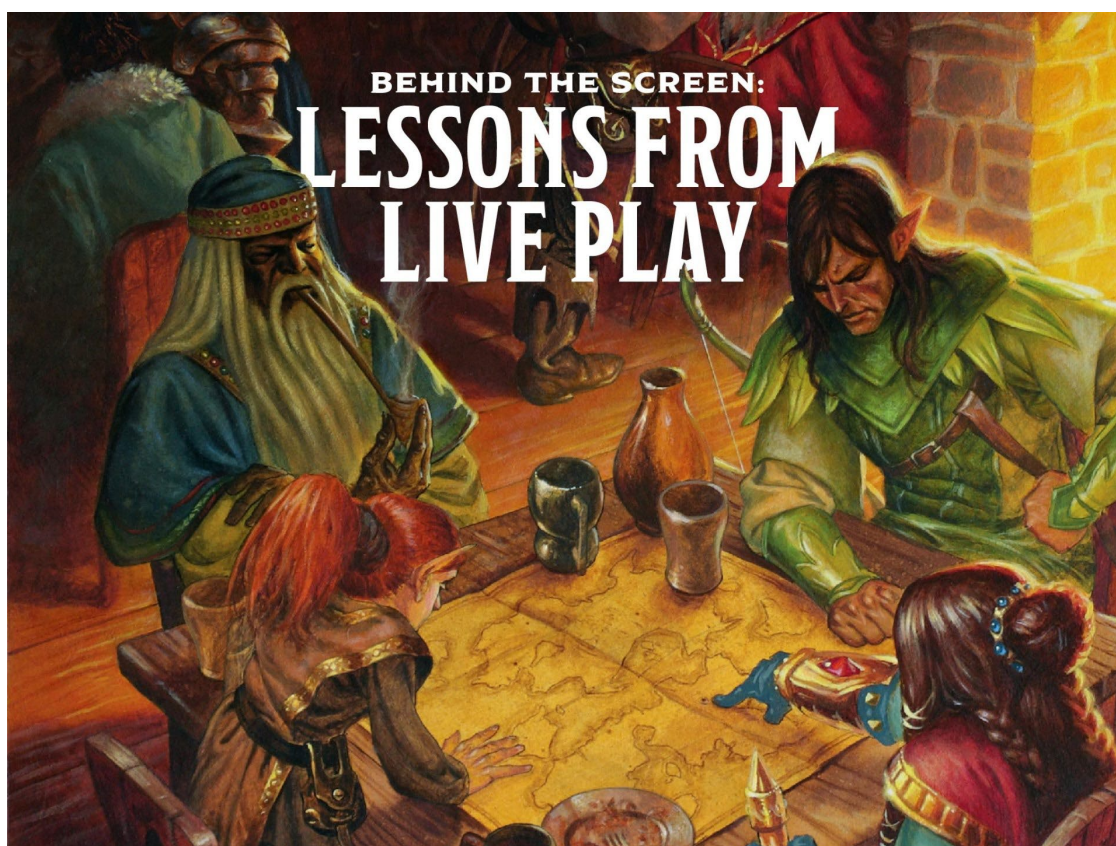








TITO  
DRAGON  
—



## Behind the Screen: Lessons from Live Play

Ethan Gilsdorf on how watching D&D streams can improve your home game.

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Unless you're a woefully misinformed gelatinous cube stuck so deep in a dungeon that you have no internet connection, you've probably heard the news: D&D is more popular than it's been in decades. You might even say D&D has gone mainstream.

Much of this revival is due to 'live play' broadcasts. Gaming groups, made up of celebrities, comedians, writers, gamers and entertainers of every stripe, regularly stream their D&D sessions on Twitch and YouTube. The most popular include *Dice, Camera, Action!* (D&D's official show, with Chris Perkins as DM); *Critical Role* (which launched a new campaign in January after ending its five-year storyline last fall); and the half-animated cartoon, half-live-before-a-



studio audience *HarmonQuest* (created by Dan Harmon, the guy behind *Community* and *Rick and Morty*). There are dozens of others, the more irreverently-named, the better: *Dragon Friends*, *Force Grey: Giant Hunters*, *High Rollers*, *Nerd Poker* and *D20 Babes* to name a few.

Livestream games now attract millions of views. Just as the video game industry built up a competitive e-sport fanbase, D&D has also become a spectator sport. These shows have also enticed hordes of new players to try the game themselves. According to Nathan Stewart, D&D's senior director, **more than half of all new players got hooked on D&D after watching it livestreamed first.**

As entertainment, watching liveplay D&D can be a hoot. And many players and DMs have become rock stars in their own right. But gamers can also learn by watching livestreamers—if you pay close attention, in and around the storytelling and tomfoolery. Whether you're a player or a DM, here are six tips from livestream games you can apply to your own campaign to make them better, and more fun to play.

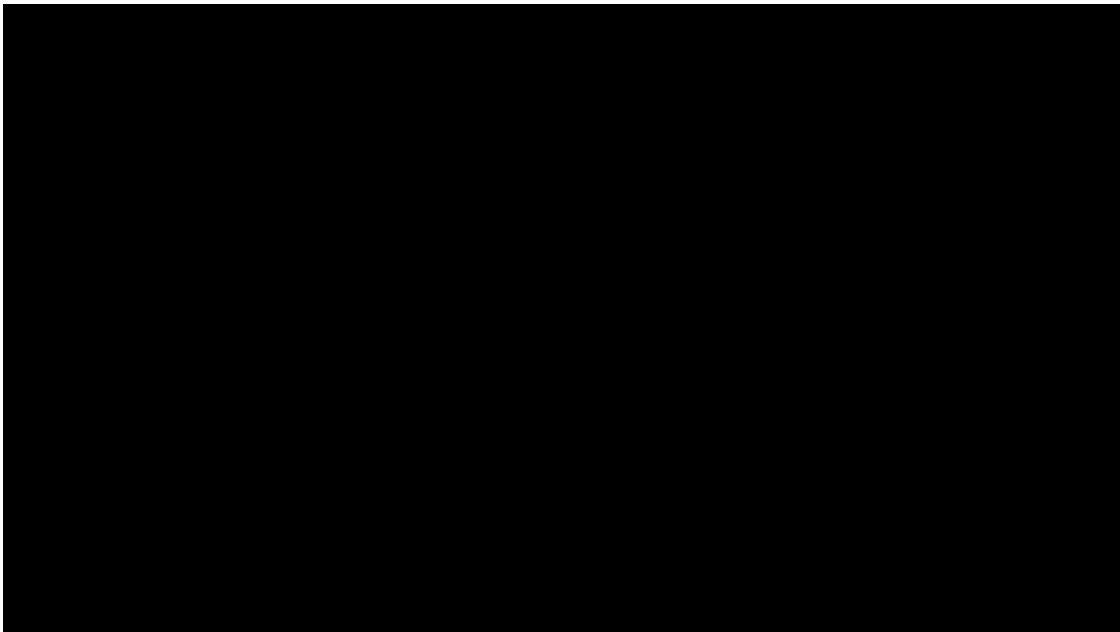


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**VOICE, GESTURE, CHARACTER!**

The professional voice actors who play in *Critical Role*, led by Matthew Mercer, can easily whip out passable Scottish or Dracula accents. Likewise, for *HarmonQuest* guest stars like Aubrey Plaza and Kumail Nanjiani, hamming it up with clever one-liners comes easy, especially when playing the likes of a half-elf arsonist or a kobold janitor named Eddie Lizzard. For the rest of us, trying to replicate these comic and dramatic performances can feel intimidating.

If you can pull off a passable voice, go for it. But you don't need to be a professional to roleplay in your own game. Take Grog Strongjaw, a barbarian/fighter played by Travis Willingham from *Critical Role*. "I have an intelligence of six," he says. "I know what I'm doing."



A quip that's true to a character's personality can make him or her come alive. In *Dice, Camera, Action!* small physical gestures also pay off big. Try pantomiming your archer firing a bow, moving your hands the way your wizard might when casting a spell, or winking at that dwarf seated at the end of the bar.

Discreet acting like this was used to great effect in an episode of *Dice, Camera, Action!* "I muddily and angrily get to my feet and glower at the guards," says Anna Prosser Robinson, playing human paladin Evelyn. Slowly, she moves her shoulders back and forth, and straightens her posture, as if struggling to stand up, all the more impressive given she's seated in front of her webcam with a headset



on. Try subtle tricks like this to inhabit your character's skin.



(Select to view)

## PAINT A PICTURE, RECAP AND TEASE

Like viewers of binge-worthy TV, D&D players want to be reminded where they are in the story—especially if eons have passed since the last gaming session. Livestream games are great at recapping the last chapter, setting the stage, and keeping the drama alive, which also helpfully keeps audiences updated on what's been going on.

As episode 67 of the *Tomb of Annihilation* storyline begins, DM Chris Perkins says, “Previously in *Dice, Camera, Action!* the characters set out into the jungles of Chult, guided by their saurian companion Dragonbait.” He then recaps the plot: the adventurers, known as the Waffle Crew, encountered a half-orc priest and her goblin steward, had “a spat” with an undead tyrannosaur, and entered a temple chasing the spirits of two children. “Oh what happened next? Something to do with Evelyn,” Perkins jokes. “I’m trying to remember...”

As for hooking your players for next time, *HarmonQuest* is especially good at cliffhangers. “But will our heroes make it in time to save the world?” says gamemaster Spencer Crittenden, wrapping up one episode. “Or would the Great Manticore be resurrected, ushering in a new age of darkness? Find out next time on *HarmonQuest!*”

If you can’t manage an on-the-fly recap of the adventure, email it to your players along with a teaser for next time, while the recent gaming session is still fresh in your head.





(Select to view)

## GROUP INTERACTION AND IMPROV, FOR GOOD AND EVIL

Perhaps your gaming group shares this problem: there may be a player who's bossy, constantly interrupting and hogging the table time. It can get uncomfortable at times. After watching hours of liveplay games, I've noticed that while there are both quieter and stronger personalities in every campaign, the DMs do an admirable job of letting each player speak. What explains it? Here's a thought: the threat of a real audience watching your every move keeps the rowdier, attention-grabbing players more in check. No one wants to look like a jerk. Think of that during your next game.

Indeed, the idea that, like livestreamers, you might have an audience of internet viewers, or even a live crowd in your basement, can be inspiring. As a gamer, you already have the skills to move the story in unexpected directions, to roleplay banter and battle tactics as situations come fast and furious. You know how to improv on the fly, so it's an easy jump to channel your inner improv actor.

Think of your gaming session as a performance, too—even if the onlookers are just a kid brother or sister loitering around the table. You may not be a LARPer, but wearing a pointy hat or helmet, and outfitting your nerd cave with some fancy furniture and accouterments, can also get you into the mood.



(Select to view)



# THE POWER OF DETAILS

Good storytellers know how to add key details: the color and shape of a glowing healing spell in a cleric's hands; where exactly a sword strikes in an umber hulk's gut; the gruesome sound effect of a falling body.

In an early episode of *Critical Role*, the group of adventurers known as Vox Machina explores the Greyspine mines. They form an alliance with a mind flayer named Clarota, who decides to kill a duergar general. DM Matthew Mercer describes the death scene this way: “It grabs his cheeks and pulls his head in towards him, as his tendrils slowly wraps around its head. You can see the meat of the back of his skull. And with this horrible *crrchkk* crunching sound, you see his head shudder, as his limbs go limp.” Then comes “a few moments of this horrible slurping sound...” Ick. precise words, and sounds, can make viewers feel unsettled, like they're right there in the action, too.

Like writers, DMs and players can focus on small, singular moments and scenes, and describe them in up-close detail, all in the service of making the story crackle in your gaming group's collective imagination.



(Select to view)

## MOVING RIGHT ALONG

Liveplay sessions do a great job of keeping the action going, sometimes packing a lot of story into an hour-long session. Like expert novelists, great DMs like Chris Perkins and Matthew Mercer compress time and advance the story using summary, skipping over great swaths of detail. Spencer Crittenden, the DM on *HarmonQuest*, also handles this nicely. In one scene, Erin McGathy plays a barbarian warrior going into a barbarian rage. “I’m gonna take out my short sword, New Friend, and I’m going to hack at the jackal,” she declares. “You hack at the jackal,” Crittenden says immediately, barely rolling a die. “It’s a critical hit.”

By cultivating a spirit of the game that foregrounds story, player engagement, and adventure, these DMs often shrink combat to its essentials and foster a “rules lite” environment. That discourages players from spending their time with their faces in rulebooks, and potentially bickering about those rules.



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# DON'T FORGET FUN!

Yes, your campaign's goals are serious, and you take your character very seriously. But in D&D, the other role you play is to have a good time. The end of the world may be nigh, as the lich's curse spreads over the lands, but don't forget to laugh, punk each other and make out-of-game jokes. These livestream games are a masterclass in showing you how it's done. In *Dice, Camera, Action!*, Holly Conrad describes her character Strix awkwardly attending a party, "standing in a corner, looking like a sad mall Goth." Or take this exchange from *HarmonQuest*, when Boneweevil, a goblin rogue (played by Jeff B. Davis) and Fondue Zoobag, a half-orc ranger (Dan Harmon) meet a hobbit-like character named Dildo Bogpelt (Thomas Middleditch from *Silicon Valley*):

**Boneweevil:** "I hesitate to even mention this, but we're pretty responsible for all three of the Arcane Runestones falling into Vortheon's hands."

**Dildo:** "Why are you bragging about that?"

**Boneweevil:** "I'm not. I'm just saying, full disclosure. Like, you're gonna find out if we embark with you on this mission together, you're gonna find out that we've met a lot of these people before, and they got the best of us every time."

**Fondue:** "We're kinda hoping that in the very final battle humility will be the weapon that defeats some kind of narcissistic dragon."

And so forth. You don't have to be a comedian, but the comedy will emerge extemporaneously, from the absurdity of your campaign. And who better to be absurd with than your friends, playing D&D?

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Ethan Gilsdorf is a journalist, critic, gamer and author of *Fantasy Freaks and Gaming Geeks*. Watch his TEDx talk "Why Dungeons & Dragons is Good for You (In Real Life)" and follow his adventures at [Ethangilsdorf.com](https://ethangilsdorf.com) and [@ethanfreak](https://twitter.com/ethanfreak).

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# Unearthed Arcana: Into The Wild

Mike Mearls introduces new ways to approach outdoor exploration...



## Playtest Material

The material here is presented for playtesting and to spark your imagination. These game mechanics are in draft form, usable in your campaign but not refined by final game development and editing. They aren't officially part of the game and aren't permitted in D&D Adventurers League events.

If we decide to make this material official, it will be refined based on your feedback, and then it will appear in a D&D book.

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**T**his month, Unearthed Arcana wanders into the wilderness, to take a fresh look at the way parties approach their travel plans.

These updated options for determining how landscapes are traversed are particularly useful when players have a specific destination in



mind. A new navigation DC also affects the chance the characters have of finding the correct route, as rules on getting lost can see a party end the day far from the intended location.

Later this month, a survey on these options will appear on the D&D website. Please try them out and let us know what you think.

Access the full details of these rules governing your daily ventures across the Forgotten Realms by downloading the PDF.

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

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To see the full treasure trove of Unearthed Arcana articles, covering new classes and feats, conversions of rules from previous editions, and much more, [visit the archive here](#).

Have a request for Unearthed Arcana? [Follow @mikemearls on Twitter](#) and let him know.

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# Unearthed Arcana: Into the Wild

## This Is Unofficial Material

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The rules for wilderness travel in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook* allow a DM to track a party's progress for each hour of travel. Those rules work similarly to the rules for dungeon navigation, in that the players pick a direction and strike off in search of adventure, adjusting their path as they go.

What I noticed in my own campaigns, though, was that players tended to focus primarily on their destination in wilderness travel. In a dungeon, players think in terms of opening the door to the east, or investigating the passage to the north. Their choices are tactical in nature, and based on the immediate environment. Adventurers might be seeking a lost shrine in a dungeon, but the decisions they make along the way are all important and interesting.

In the wilderness, most situations allow the characters to travel in any direction they choose. Their choices are circumstantial rather than tactical. So when the characters decide to seek out a ruined temple in the forest, the choices they make along the way matter less than that initial big-picture decision.

The following approach to wilderness exploration and travel provides a new overlay for the existing rules from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and the *Player's Handbook*. They're built around the idea that the players have a specific destination in mind as the party sets out for the day. They also require that you take a new approach to designing the wilderness regions of your campaign as a DM.

## Resolving Travel

These optional rules break overland travel down into four different phases.

### Wilderness Travel Phases

Choose destination

Choose activities

Resolve activities and travel

Camp

## Choose Destination

Before the party begins traveling for the day, the players must choose a destination. A destination can be a place the party can reach that same day, or one that requires several days of travel.

If the characters want to wander an area without a specific destination, use the standard rules for wilderness travel and exploration from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and the *Player's Handbook* as they venture across your map.

## Navigation DC

These rules introduce a new concept called the navigation DC. Some destinations can be found automatically, but others have a DC that measures the difficulty of finding a path to reach them. The Navigation DC table provides some examples.

Some locations might be difficult or even impossible to find without the characters first meeting a specific prerequisite. Reaching an invisible tower floating in the air might require a special magic item that leads the characters to it. Or if a mundane location is hidden within a thick mist that fills a valley, characters who find a way to disperse the mist can lower the navigation DC for that location significantly.



## Navigation DCs

DC	Description
None	Destination has a clear road, trail, or well-marked path leading to it
10	Destination lacks a path but is in open terrain
15	Destination lacks a path but is in dense terrain such as forest or mountains
20	Destination is hidden, with active efforts made to conceal its existence through mundane means
25	Destination is hidden using illusions or other magic
30	Destination is hidden using powerful magic, such as a regional effect that causes a forest's trees to slowly shift and force characters onto the wrong path

## Choose Activities

Each player undertakes an activity while traveling, choosing from among the options offered in chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*—but with one modification. In any case where the destination has a navigation DC, at least one character must choose to navigate in order to give the party a chance to reach its destination.

## Resolve Activities and Travel

Using these rules, a single set of ability checks for the characters' activities resolves a full day's worth of travel. The activities from the *Player's Handbook* function as described, with the following exceptions.

### Navigation

If the party's destination has a navigation DC, one character must make a Wisdom (Survival) check against that DC, applying normal modifiers for the party's travel pace and other factors. With a successful check, the characters make progress toward their destination, perhaps even reaching it if they move quickly enough. If the check fails, or if no character makes a check when the destination has a navigation DC, the party becomes lost.

### Becoming Lost

If the party becomes lost, the characters end the day at the wrong location. Roll on the Becoming

Lost table to determine where the characters end up. If a result would be impossible—such as requiring the characters to travel farther than they can in a day—just pick a point between the characters' starting point and their intended final location that represents one day's travel.

### Becoming Lost

d6	Result
1–4	2d6 miles in a random direction from destination
5–6	After traveling in circles, end 1d6 miles in a random direction from starting point

## Random Encounters

While traveling using these rules, use the normal guidelines for random encounters found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. As an optional rule for when the characters are lost, roll twice for each random encounter check to reflect that the characters might blunder into a monster lair or other unusual threat.

### Travel

After determining if a group becomes lost or has a random encounter, check your map to determine the characters' route during the day. From their starting location, track how far they travel toward their destination. Narrate any changes in terrain or any special locations the characters find along the way, resolving encounters as needed.

## Describing the Wilds

In the same way that a map and an encounter key describe a dungeon, the wilderness can be summarized with a hex map and a collection of interesting features.

## Mapping the Wilderness

The guidance given for wilderness mapping in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* applies to these rules, with one potential exception. It's a good idea to map out an area that a party can cover in a day or two of travel, to allow your design to bring out the details that make each area unique.

When creating a wilderness, take the time to think about the mood of an area. Is it a hot,

oppressive desert? Is it a terrifying realm of craggy peaks and rivers of lava, with a massive fortress-spire built by a god of war looming over the landscape?

Take time to also think about what creatures are active in the wilderness, and why. Are the characters moving through a war-torn land, with orc patrols harassing the characters? Do hobgoblin legions struggle to tame a wild frontier, building defensive points to help claim it? Are there legendary, deadly monsters that hunt in this region?

Pay special attention to friendly settlements and roads. The ease of movement roads provide and the promise of a safe haven make well-traveled and settled areas attractive to most characters—especially low-level characters.

## Adventure Locations

Consider each of the potential adventure locations on your map, and assign navigation DCs to them as appropriate. Take into account the creatures that dwell nearby, a site's notoriety, the presence of any paths or roads leading there, and so forth.

## Regional Effects

Review the monsters that lair in your wilderness, and determine if any exert regional effects that you need to account for. Regional effects (described in the *Monster Manual*) are a great tool for showing the players how the presence of a powerful creature can alter the environment. They also add an element of magic and strangeness to areas that might otherwise seem mundane.

## Determine Checks and DCs

Take note of the DC needed to forage in an area. But also think about DCs for any other ability checks that you feel are relevant for the region. A few appropriate skills for such checks are noted below.

An ability check you call for might be part of an existing activity, it might require a special activity relevant to an area, or it might be a check you ask for only as appropriate. In any case, asking for special checks can help drive home a region's unique character and dangers.

**Athletics.** You might require characters to attempt Strength (Athletics) checks to navigate difficult terrain such as broken ground or mountain peaks, with failure slowing the party and causing injury.

**History.** A successful Intelligence (History) check might allow a character to locate a forgotten road, identify the origin of ruins, or find a site mentioned in myth or legend.

**Nature.** By attempting Intelligence (Nature) checks, characters might identify what sorts of creatures dwell in an area based on subtle clues, or spot the effect of magic on a natural ecosystem.

**Stealth.** It's good to call for Dexterity (Stealth) checks in areas that are heavily patrolled or under the watch of a specific creature. Failing the check or moving too quickly to be stealthy brings the characters under scrutiny.

**Survival.** In an area infested with deadly plants or other natural hazards, successful Wisdom (Survival) checks can allow the characters to avoid gathering and eating poisonous plants, to spot quicksand and other hazards, and to avoid paths or areas where dangerous creatures prowl.

## Tactical Terrain

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As a final useful tool, consider creating a quick table to help you generate terrain for random encounters, or for other events that require a more detailed view as the characters explore. A random table filled with iconic terrain for an area can help inspire you in the moment, and ensures that the interesting key elements of a region remain part of the action.

Start off with at least one or two noteworthy features that are always present. Then think of a few simple but distinctive features that you'd expect to find in specific areas. If flat grasslands are a dominant feature, you might also have low hills, ruins, watering holes, thorny bushes, and other less common features to break things up.

Once you are done, create a list of all your terrain features and assign each one a percentage chance to be present in an area (including 100 percent for dominant features). Then when you need to create an encounter area quickly, you can roll for each feature to see if it is



present—thinking of these key features as tactical features that can have an impact on the encounter.

## Sample Region: Moon Hills

The Moon Hills are a rugged series of steep hills at the heart of Nentir Vale. Patrols from Fallcrest help keep the area's organized threats in check, but monsters often make forays out from the Cloak Wood. Strange creatures drawn from the Feywild, the Shadowfell, and the Elemental Plane of Earth are also found here.

### Ambient Mood

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The hills are steep and sharp, with jagged escarpments forming sprawling, hilly plateaus. Small groves dot the area, as do the occasional burial mound, watchtowers from ancient Saruun Khel, and other old ruins. The features of the Moon Hills include the following:

- Play up the hills and the jagged cliff faces, making travel through this area feel like navigating a maze. Straight and easy paths are rare here.
- Random boulders are common in the area, placed by the influence of elemental earth and looking as though they were dropped from the sky. Wind and rain erode the soil to reveal other strange rock formations that develop as elemental earth energy seeps into the landscape.
- The area's key hook is the presence of many crossings to the Feywild and the Shadowfell. The minotaurs of Saruun Khel traveled to both those planes and the Plane of Earth to trade. The distorted topography of the Moon Hills is due in part to the influence of earth magic, and areas near planar crossings exhibit otherworldly traits. This doesn't always imply the presence of monsters, but it can leave travelers feeling unsettled.
- Plenty of farms and manor houses are found in the area, owing to its proximity to Fallcrest. Trails, old fences of wood or stone, property

markers, and so on are common sights, especially near the roads and the river.

- Several druids are active in the area, drawn by the ambient planar energy and its effects on the land. Though rocky, the soil of the Moon Hills is bountiful, in part because of the links to the Feywild and the Plane of Earth. Though in some areas, the influence of the Shadowfell renders the land gray and dull.
- The maze-like nature of this land promises lots of hidden areas and sudden discoveries. When bandits are active here, they thrive on ambush.
- The variety of terrain and features makes travel in the Moon Hills challenging. Any experienced traveler can attempt to navigate this place, but the lack of clear sight lines and the difficulty of long-distance navigation can make things daunting for the inexperienced.

### Settlements

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An attack on any of the farms or manors in the Moon Hills draws the notice of travelers or locals within a day or two. While the area has its secrets, the countryside is civilized overall.

### Ruins and Dungeons

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The area is dotted with a few basic types of ruins and dungeons, including the following:

- Megaliths have been raised by the druids, with tunnels and chambers excavated beneath them. They are constructed at points where planar energy is strongest, putting many in proximity with ancient ruins of Saruun Khel.
- Ruined watchtowers and small forts built by the Saruun minotaurs dot the landscape. Humanoid monsters use them as temporary bases.
- A few abandoned farmhouses and manors are found in the hills. These are the legacy of raids that took place when this area was not so well protected by Fallcrest.
- Undiscovered vaults of Saruun Khel are still hidden in the Moon Hills.
- An earth cult might establish a hidden base in the area.

## Moon Hills Exploration

Wracked by energy from the Plane of Earth and dotted with crossings to the Feywild and the Shadowfell, the Moon Hills can be difficult to navigate away from the safety of Fallcrest and its immediate environs. The hills form a confusing mess of paths between their steep slopes.

### Moon Hills Summary

**Navigation.** The steep hills and the winding paths between them can be confusing, but the sparse vegetation of the hills allows clear views of the sky. If the characters are off the roads or paths that wind through this area, they must always navigate to avoid becoming lost—even if their destination does not normally require a check. In that case, the check DC is 10.

**Foraging.** DC 10; water and light game are plentiful.

**Special Rules.** If the characters take a long rest here, roll on the planar confluence table.

### Navigation

If the characters are seeking a specific location, use the DCs on the table. Characters who become lost must make a check to navigate to a destination, even if they have a map or know the path from having made a prior visit.

#### Moon Hills Navigation DCs

DC	Location
None	Fallcrest
None	Watcher's Point
15	Bandit camp (common criminals)
15	Obsidian standing stones
15	Ruins of the Horned Tower
20	Dungeon of the Sleeping Titan
25	Pits of the Fang
30	Lost gate of the Laughing Path

### Planar Confluence

Parties that rest in the Moon Hills risk exposure to planar magic. Whenever the characters complete a long rest here, roll a d20 and consult the table.

### Moon Hills Planar Confluence

d20	Result
1–16	No effect
17–18	Shadowfell influence causes nightmares or disturbing visions; regain only half spent Hit Dice
19	Feywild influence grants vivid, exciting dreams or visions; gain inspiration
20	Earth influence fortifies and strengthens flesh and bones; gain temporary hit points equal to character level

### Terrain

The Moon Hills are an ideal spot for ambush, as the steep slopes favor a well-planned attack. Bandits and intelligent monsters prefer to open an assault with missile fire from atop a hill. Their targets can either trudge upslope, enduring attacks along the way, or flee along the gullies between the hills. But with the gullies providing a predictable path, smart attackers have more ambushers in place just around the corner. Devious foes might even send a group to cut off retreat back in the ambushed travelers' original direction.

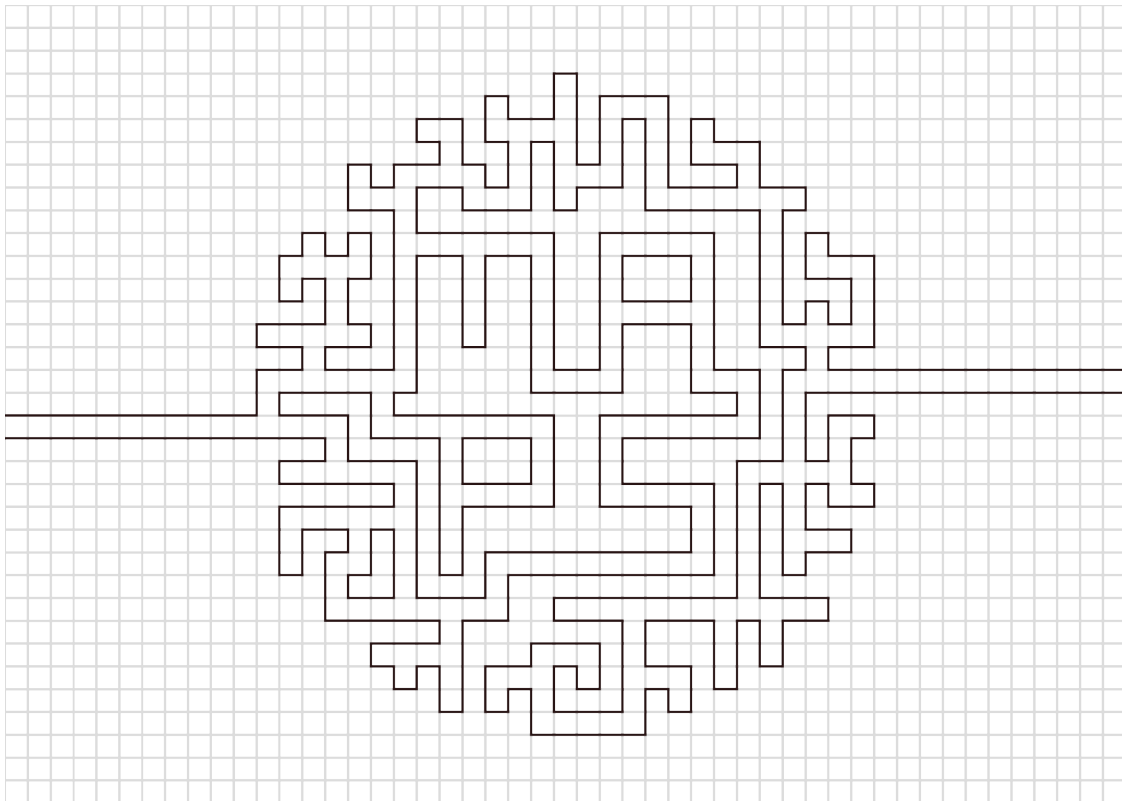
#### Moon Hills Tactical Terrain

%	Description
100%	1d3 + 1 steep hills (gullies serve as paths between them)
100%	2d4 + 2 scattered trees
25%	Boulder field (scattered along gullies and with 1d3 still perched on hilltops, ready to be rolled with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check; Dexterity save DC 10; 2d6 bludgeoning and knocked prone)
10%	Ruined watchtower of Saruun Khel
5%	Shadowfell influence (disadvantage on death saving throws in the area)
5%	Feywild influence (disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws in the area)



# Maps of the Month

Further maps from Tomb of Annihilation, plus a look back at Out of the Abyss!



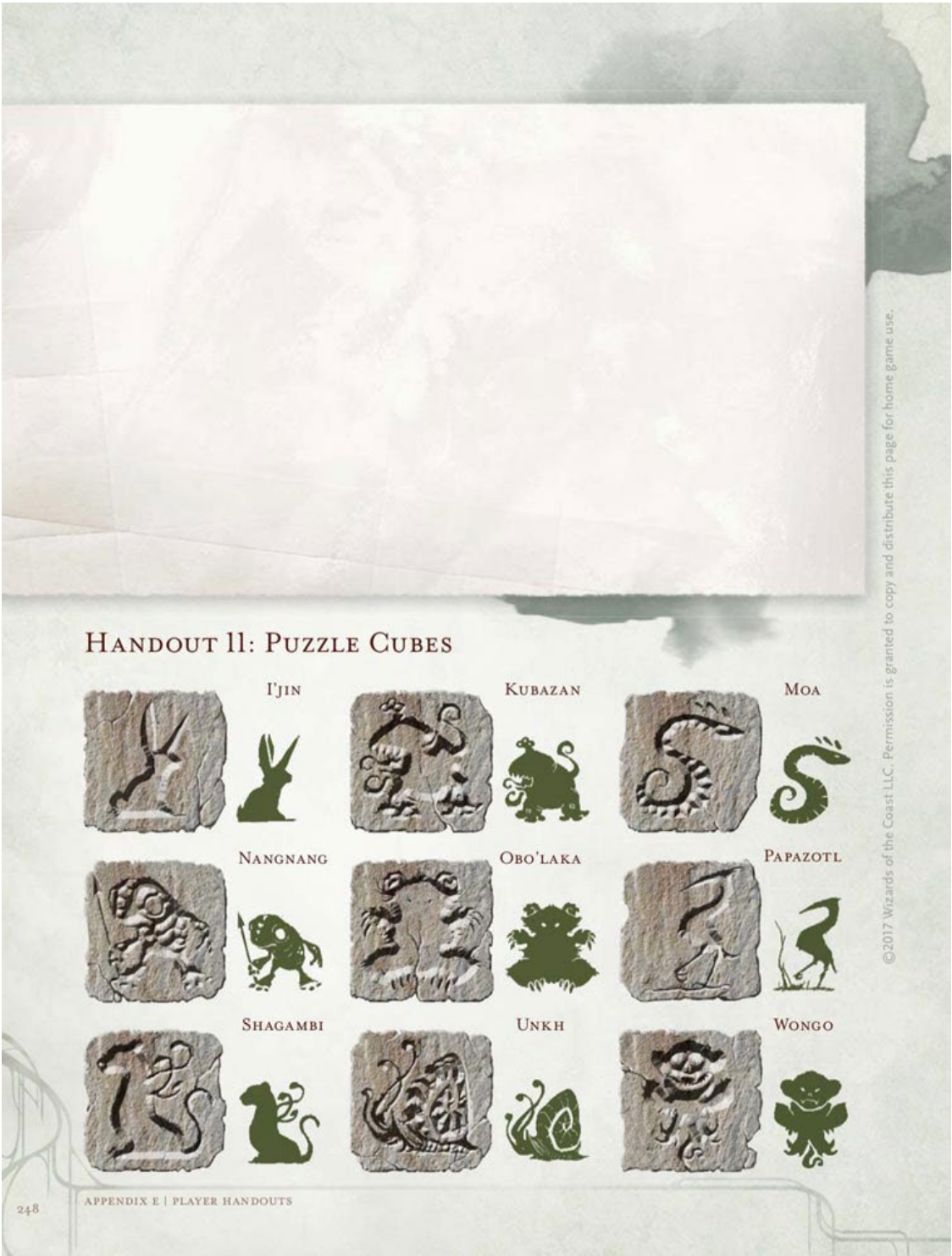
***WARNING: THESE MAPS MAY CONTAIN SPOILERS FOR  
BALDUR'S GATE: DESCENT INTO AVERNUS, EBERRON:  
RISING FROM THE LAST WAR, AND EXTRA LIFE:  
INFERNAL MACHINE REBUILD.***

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Last issue, we explored maps from *Tomb of Annihilation*'s Tomb of the Nine Gods. This time, we offer a continued selection, including maps for the Nine Shrines, Nangalore, Camp Vengeance and the Fane of the Night Serpent, in both tagged and untagged versions!

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## HANDOUT



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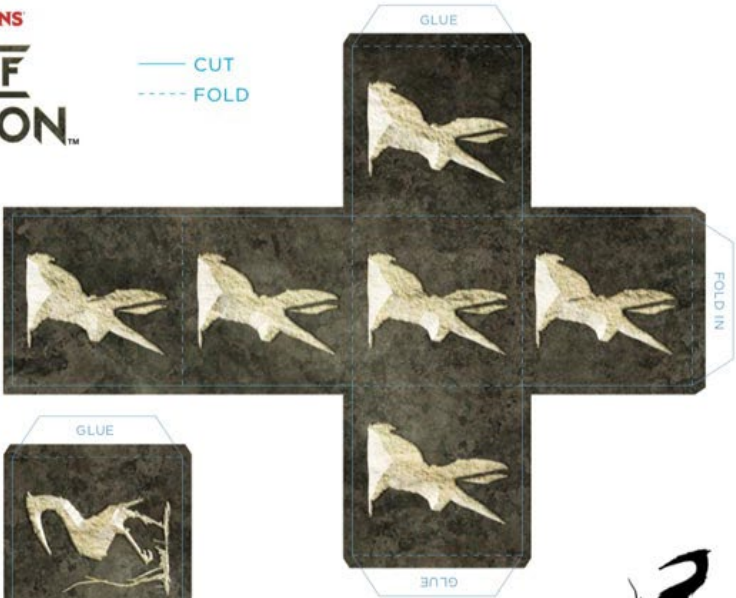
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS  
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**I'JIN,  
THE ALMIRAJ**

I'jin is a fickle and unpredictable god who never sticks to a plan.



**PAPAZOTL, THE EBLIS**

Papazotl is a shrewd and conniving god who bows before no one and expects others to do as he commands.



**KUBAZAN,  
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Kubazan is a wild and spirited god who is fearless and not afraid to take risks.



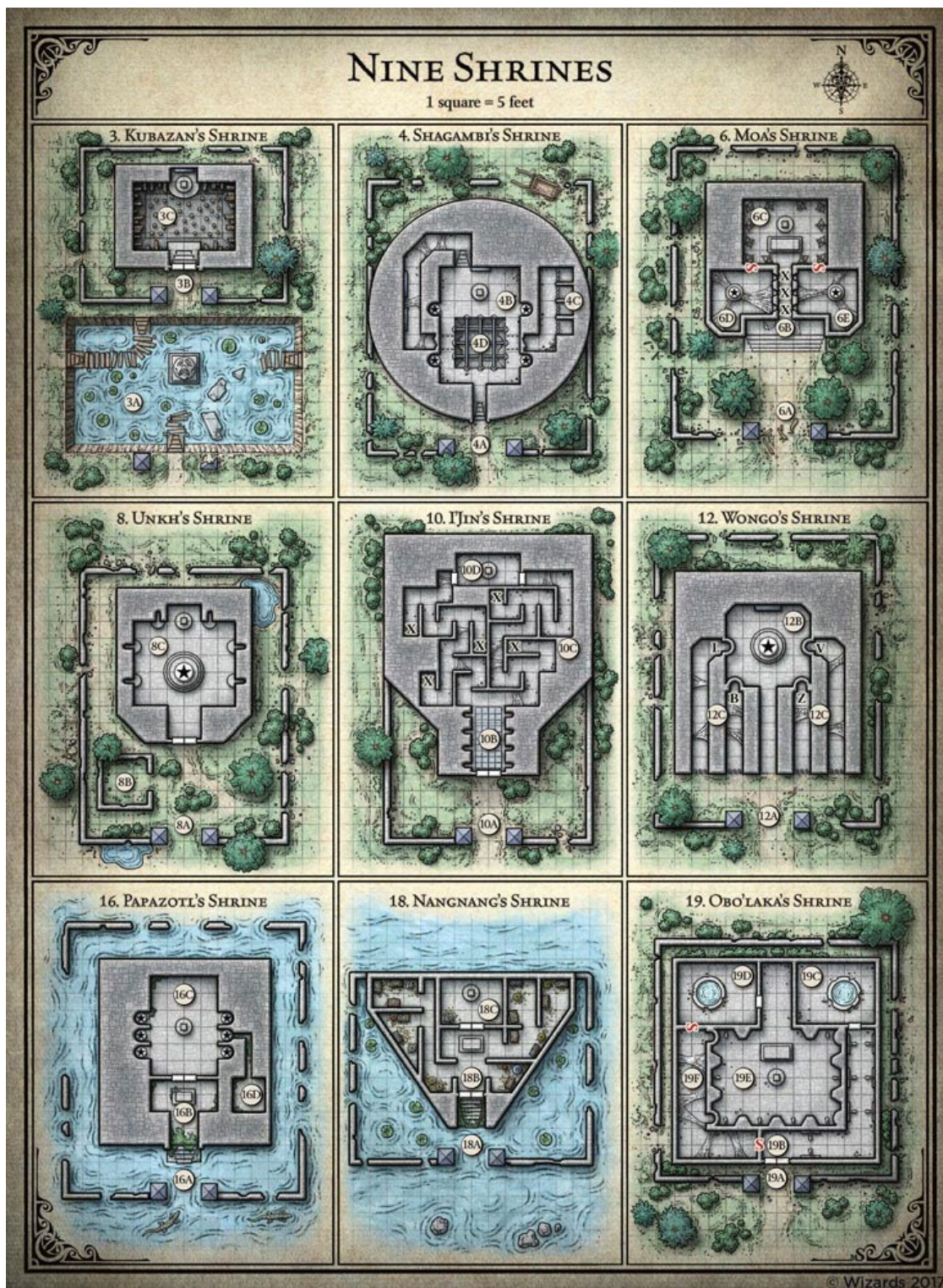
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NINE SHRINES

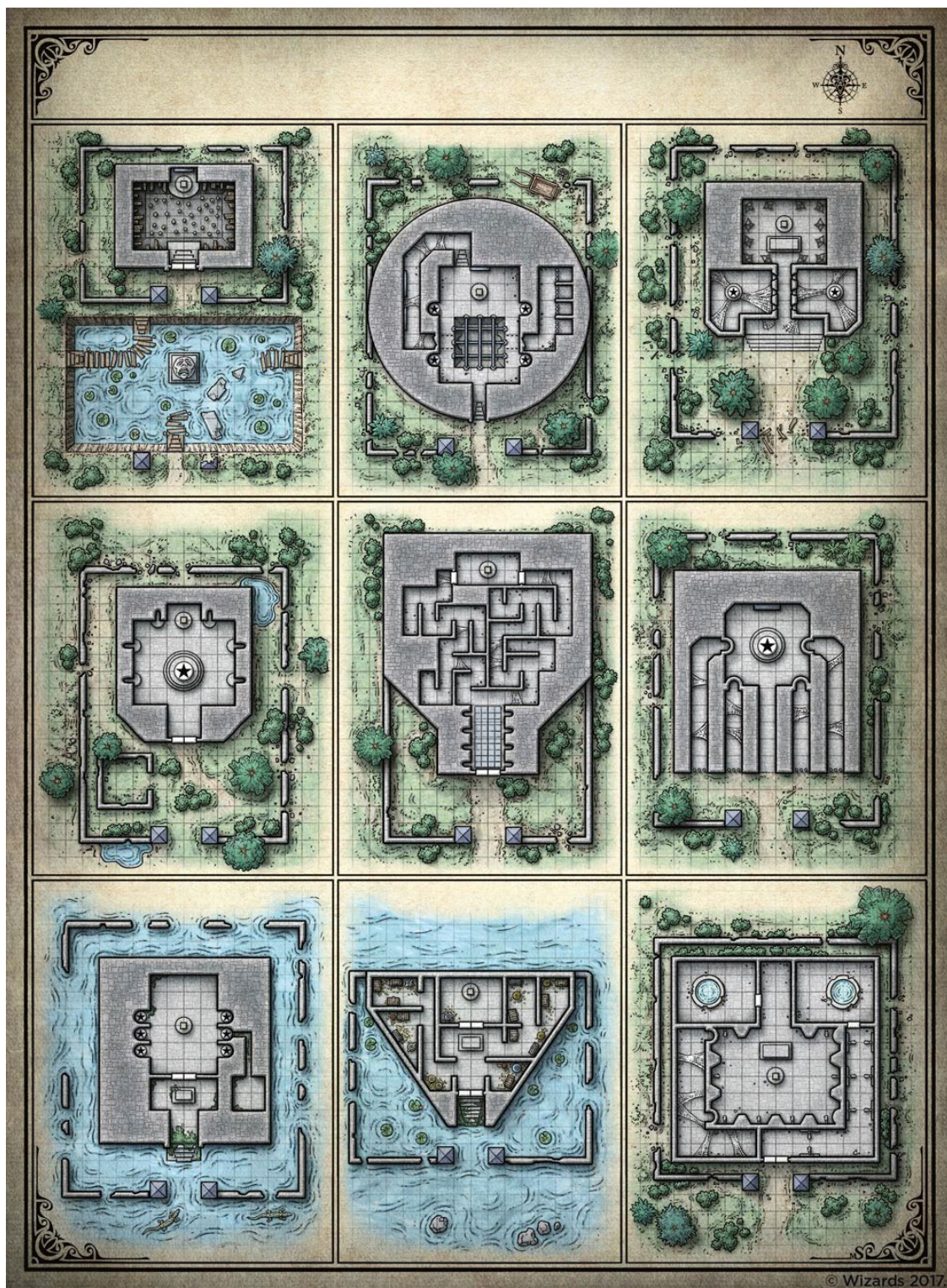




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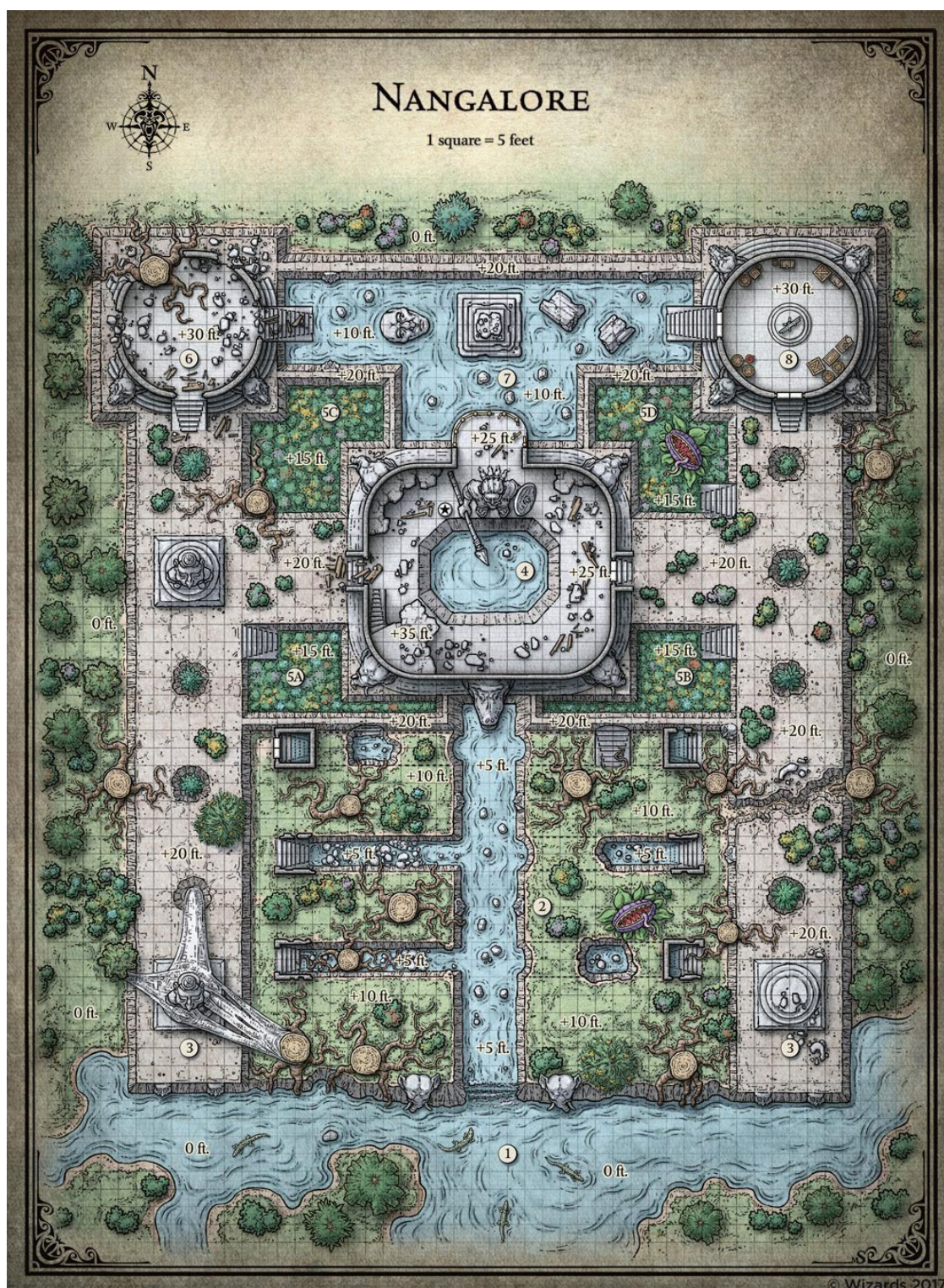


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## Nangalore

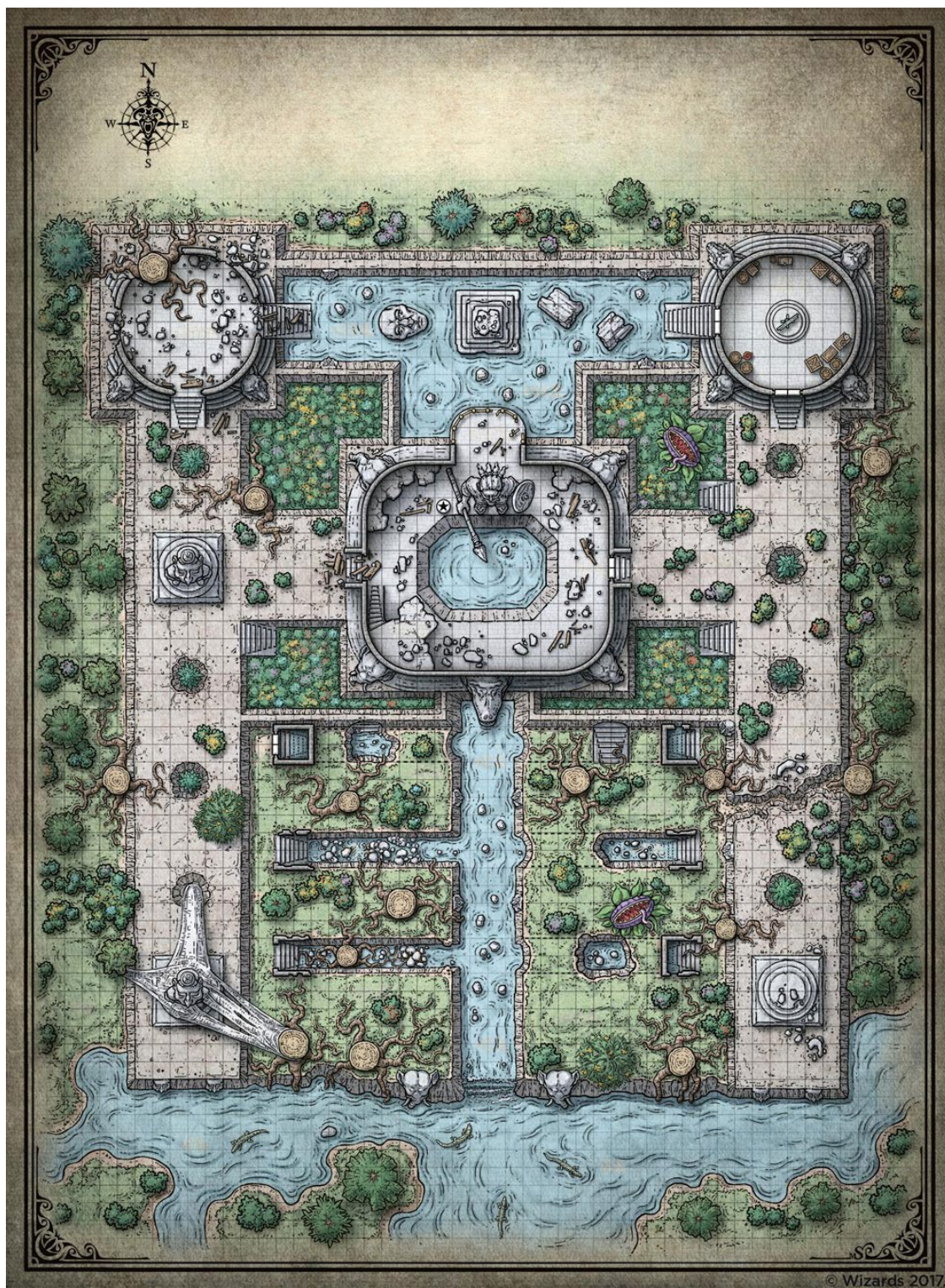




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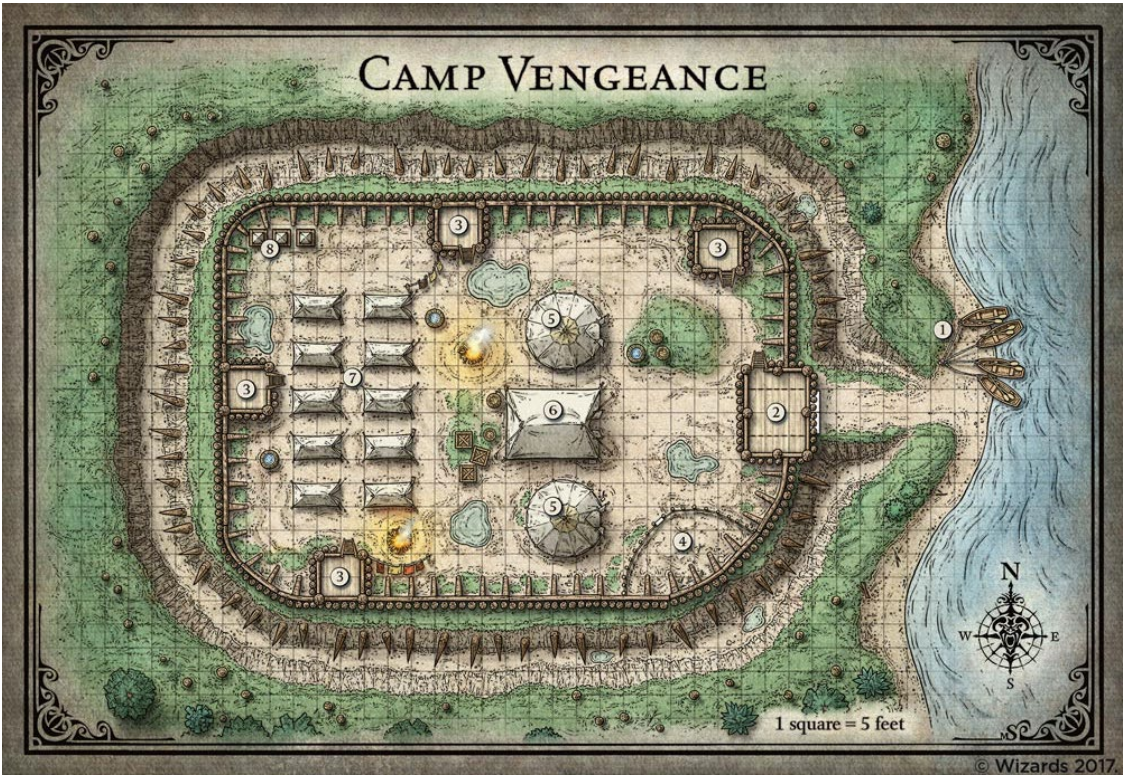


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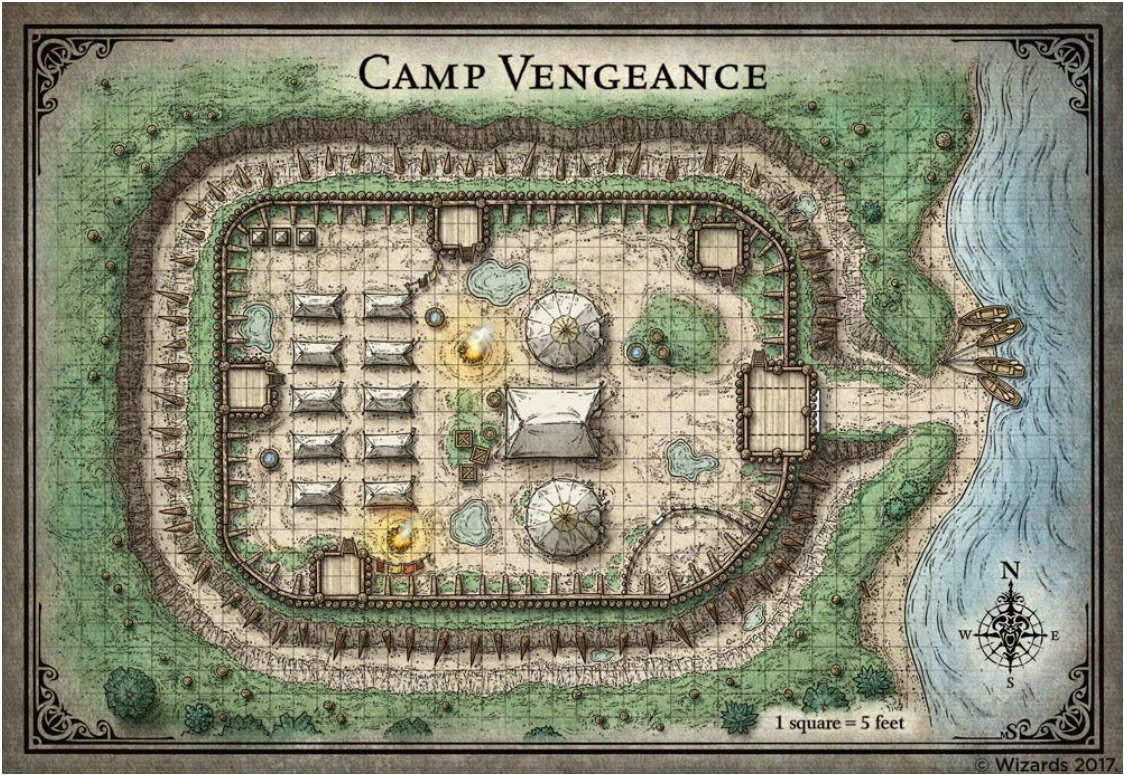
## Camp Vengeance





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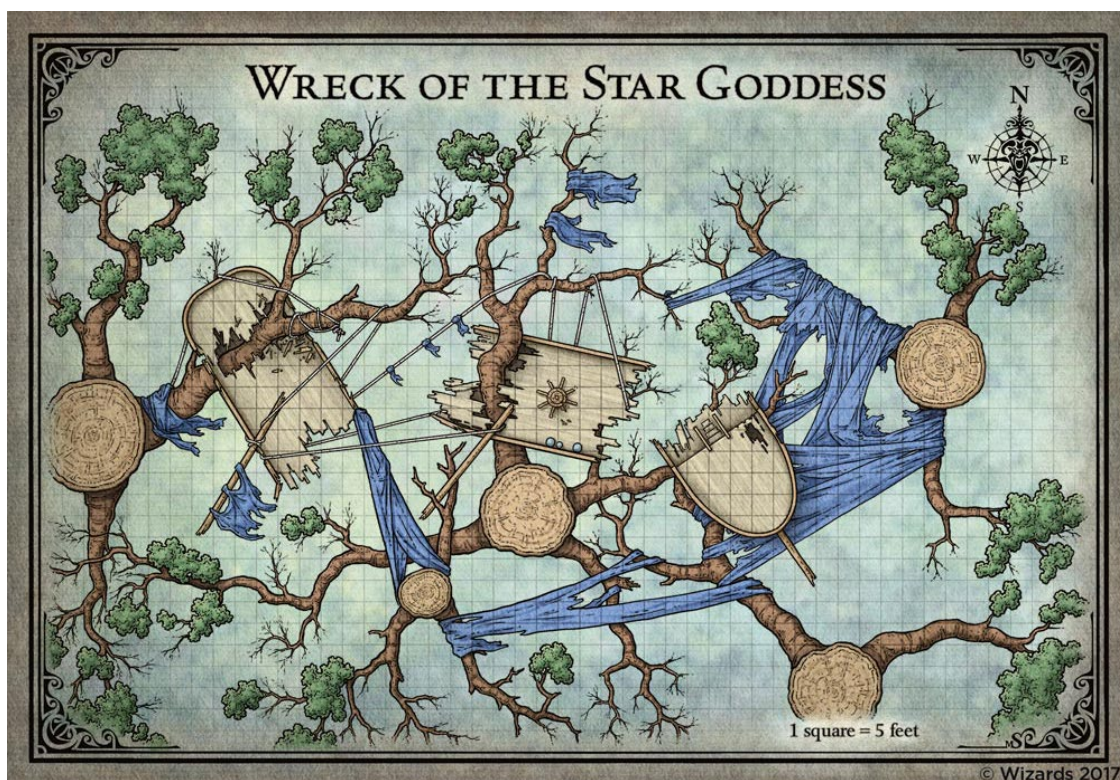


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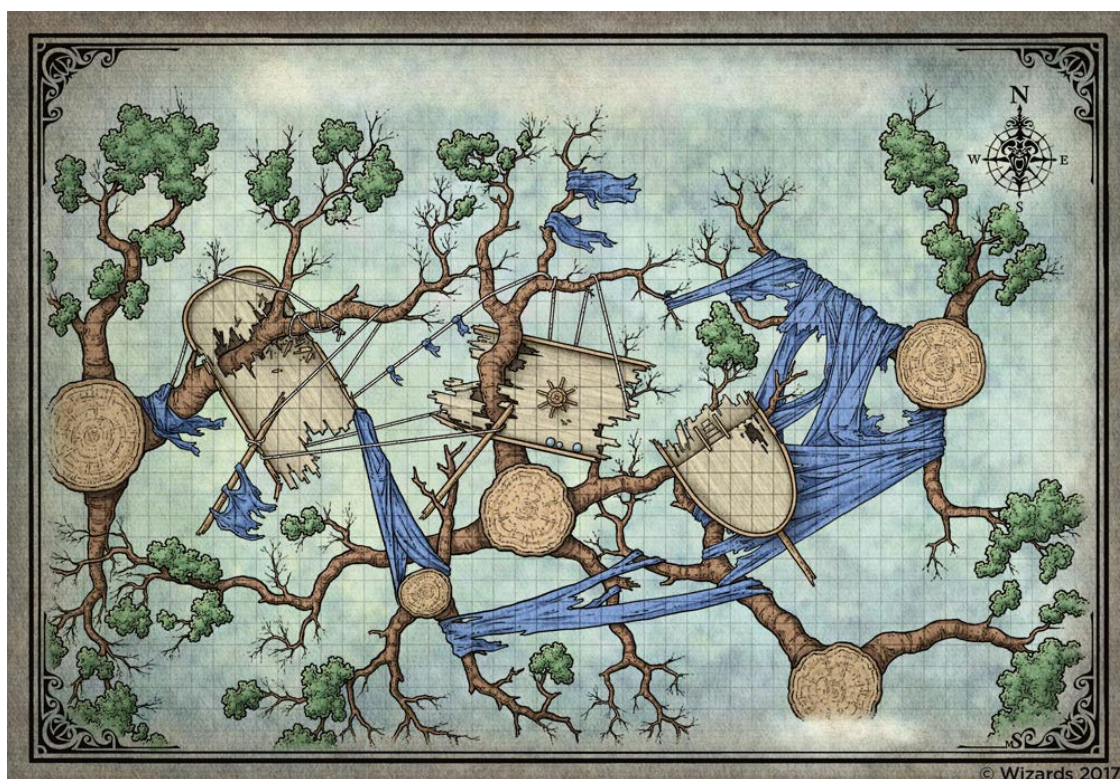


# Wreck of the Star Goddess



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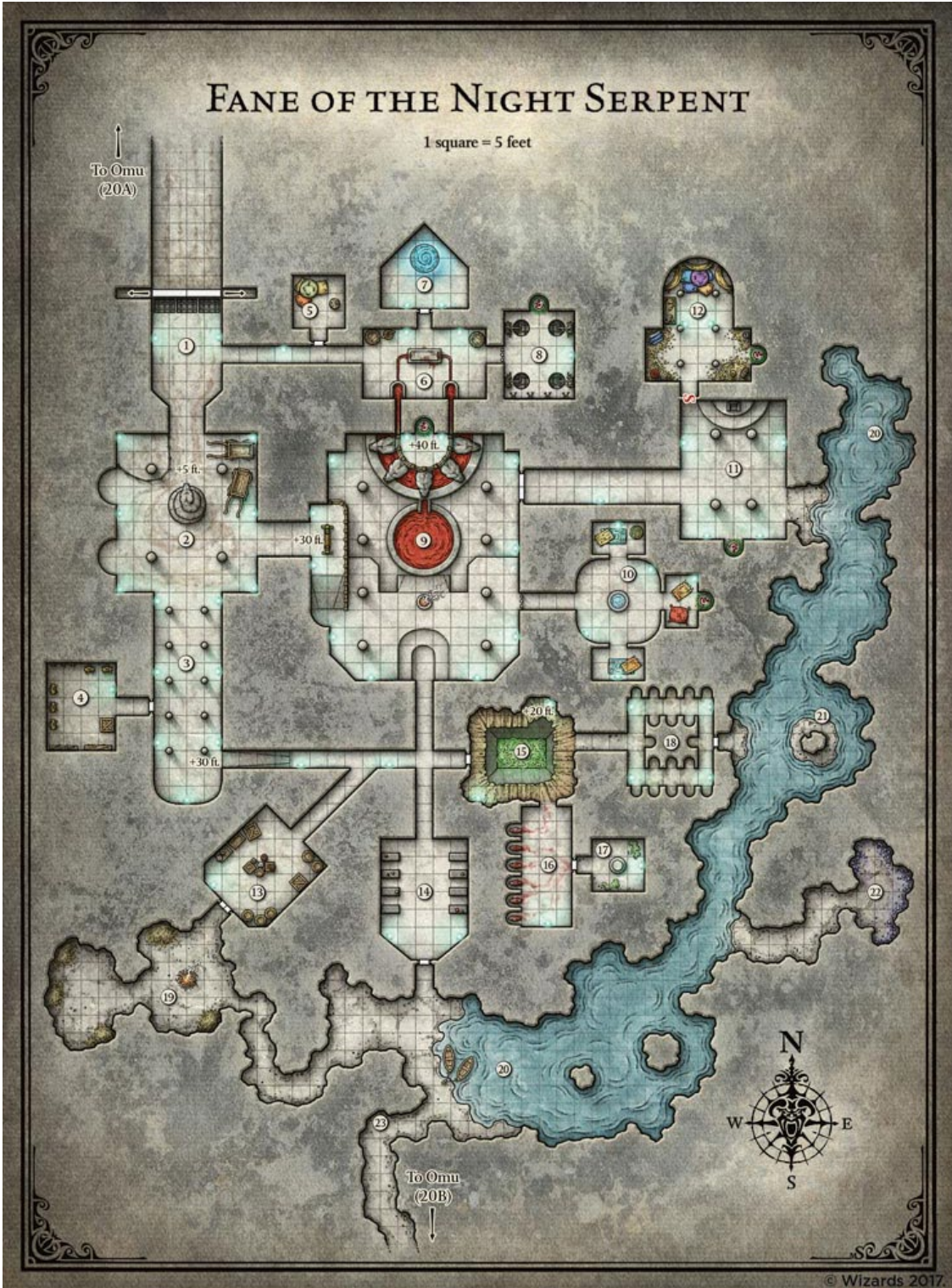




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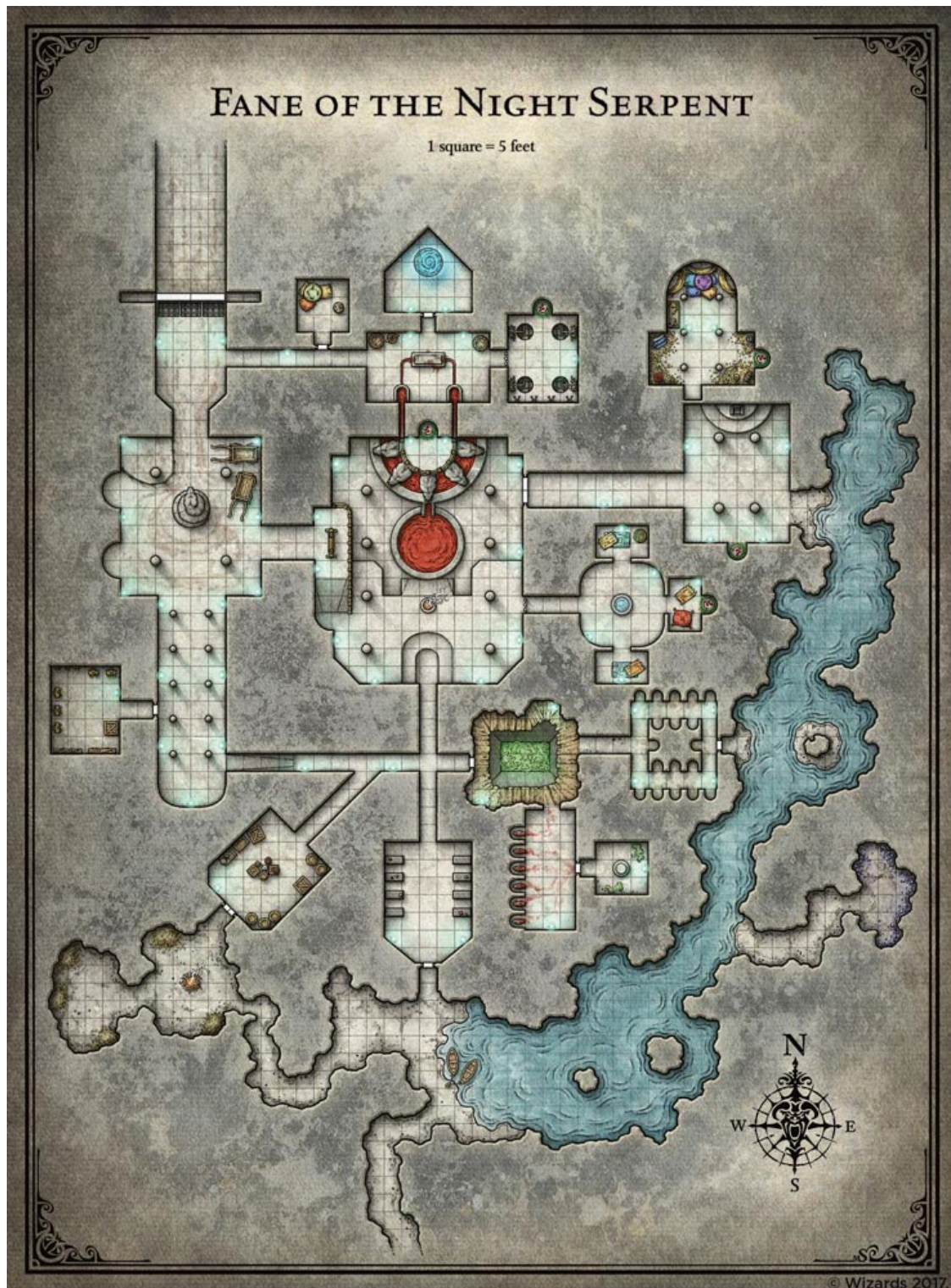
# Fane of the Night Serpent



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# OUT OF THE ABYSS

For our crossover issue, we also wanted to include maps from other adventures. And considering Mordenkainen's fascination with demons and devils, we figured *Out of the Abyss* to be an apt choice!

## The Oozing Temple



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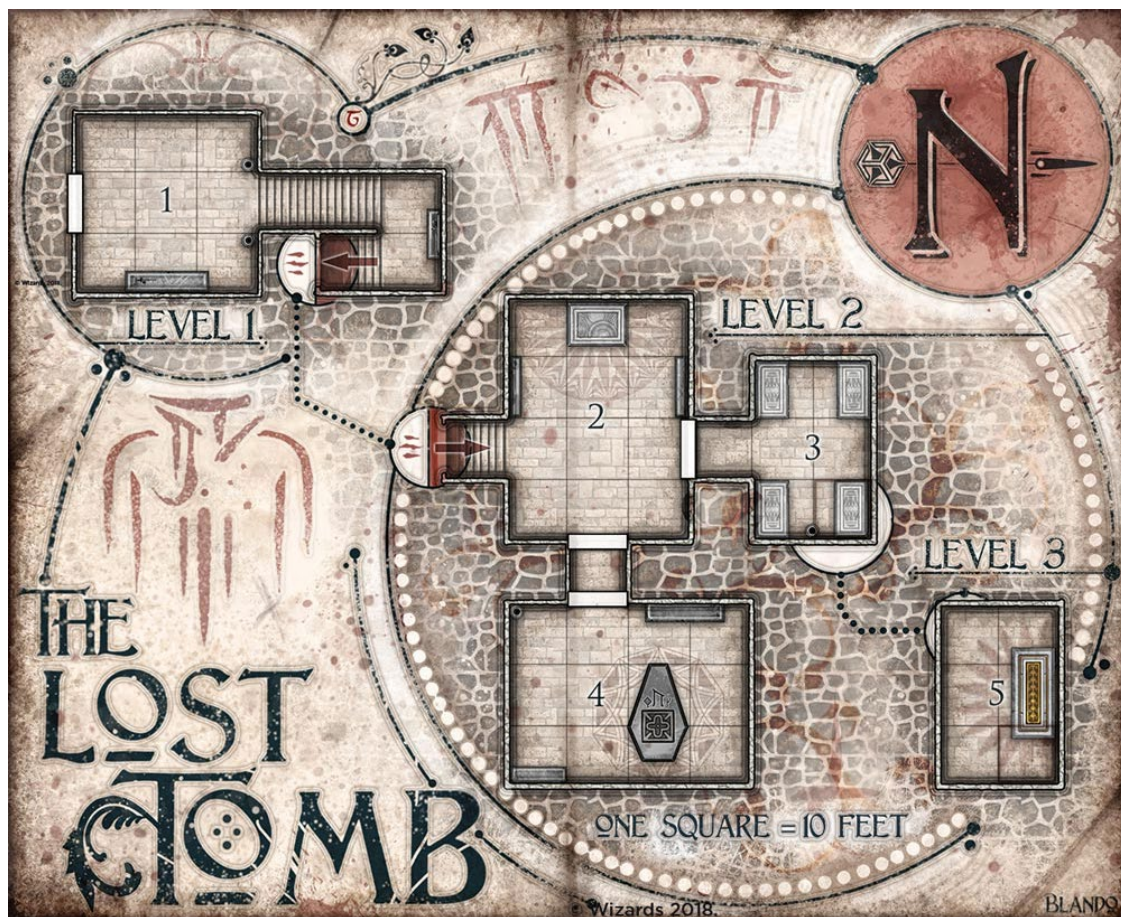


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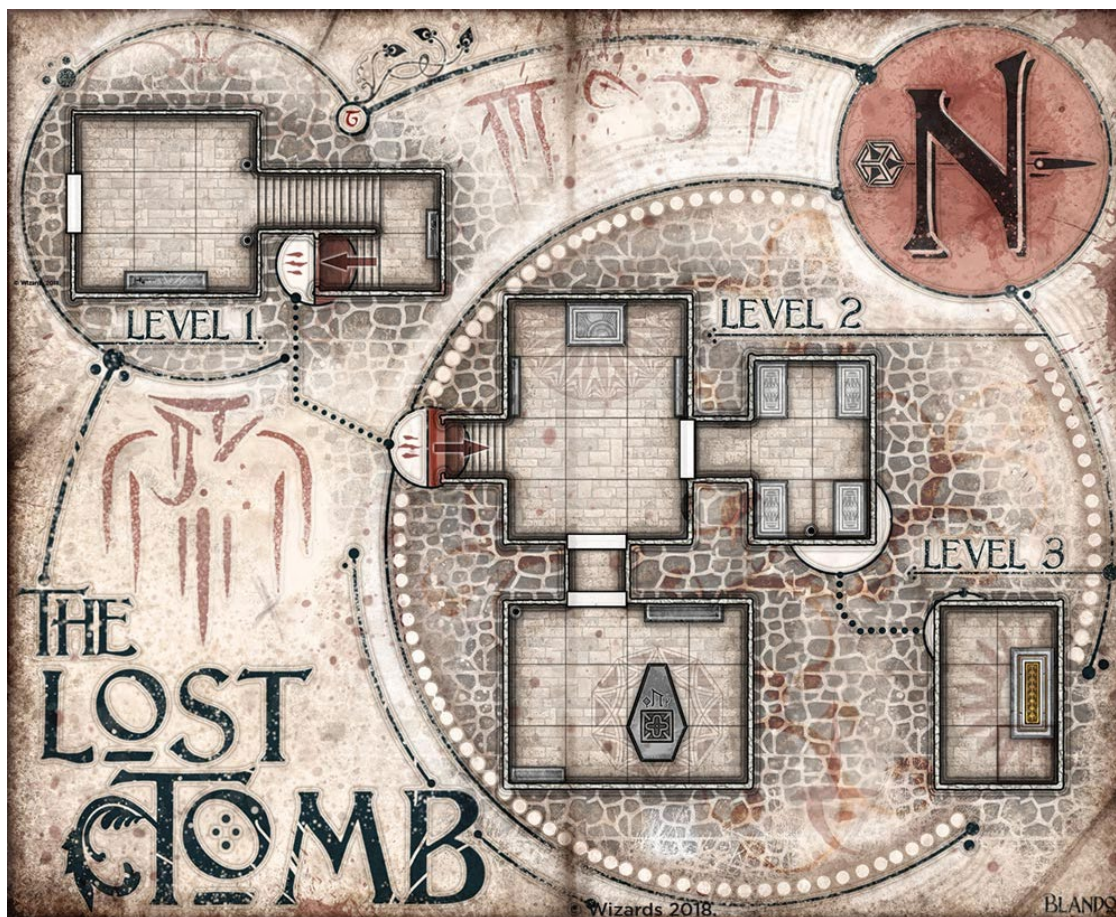
## The Lost Tomb



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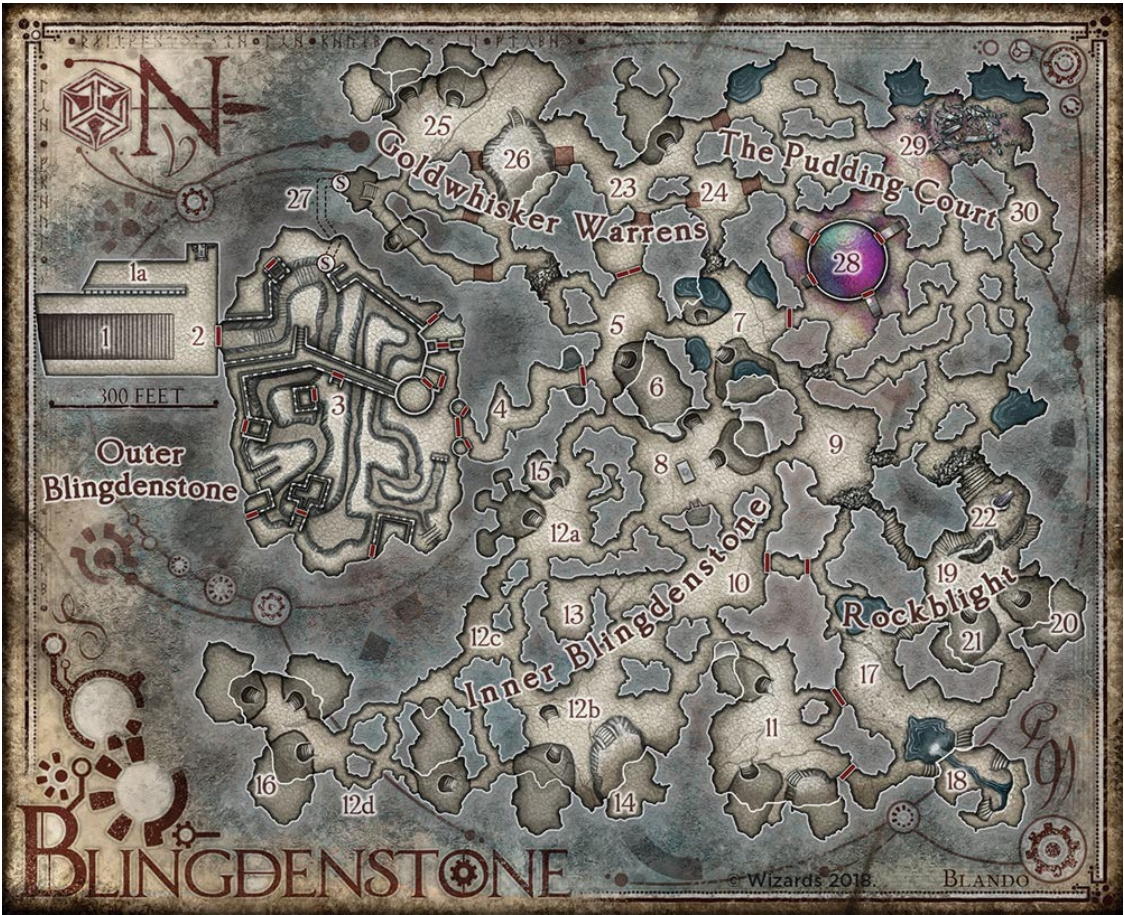


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## Blingdenstone



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### Digital Maps

Please note that *Tomb of Annihilation* and *Out of the Abyss* can both be found at **Fantasy Grounds** and the **Roll20** virtual tabletop. Look for these adventures available now!

### Cartographers

And as always, our appreciation goes out to our amazing cartographers; this issue, these include **Mike Schley** and **Jared Blando**.

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## HANDOUT 11: PUZZLE CUBES





**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

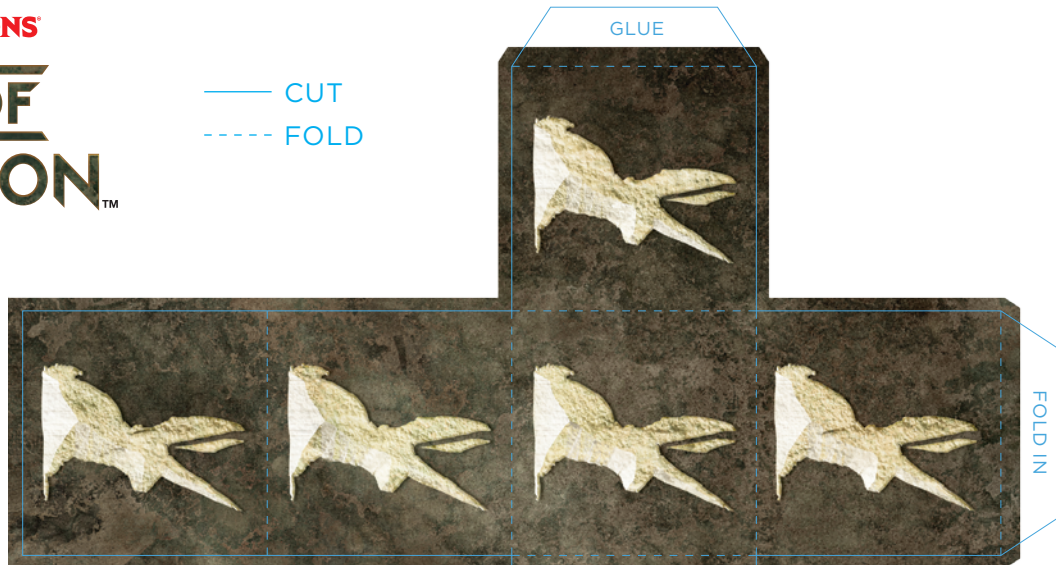
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I'jin is a fickle and unpredictable god who never sticks to a plan.



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**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

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**NANGNANG,  
THE GRUNG**

Nangnang is a skittish and cruel god who won't share with others.



**MOA, THE JACULI**

Moa is a truthful and kind god who never tells a lie.



**SHAGAMBI,  
THE KAMADAN**

Shagambi is a wise and savage god who never shows mercy to evildoers.





**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

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**WONGO,  
THE SU-MONSTER**

Wongo is a violent and deranged god who acts recklessly without concern for others.



**UNKH, THE FLAIL SNAIL**

Unkh is a self-absorbed and overly contemplative god who is incapable of making decisions.



**OBO'LAKA,  
THE ZORBO**

Obo'laka is an obsessive-compulsive god who is an overly cautious slave to routine.



# Next Issue: Dragon+ 19

Check out this preview of Issue 19



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**W**e continue our in-depth look at *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* in *Dragon+* Issue 19, offering up another exclusive preview plucked from within its pages. And it's not the only piece of meaningful writing created by a master in his field that we'll be poring over...

It's 30 years since R.A. Salvatore's *The Crystal Shard* debuted, and we'll be speaking with the fantasy author about this momentous anniversary. We'll also be asking designers and DMs what impact his book had on them, as they think back to a time before more than a few new players chose to play a drow with two scimitars, to gauge how Drizzt and Salvatore's storytelling has influenced their lives and their work. R.A. will also be telling us what's up next for Menzoberranzan's most famous exile, as we discuss his new book!

There are also plenty of special events on the horizon, including a major livestreaming binge, as well as charity games that are as fun as they are worthy. We'll show you how to get a front row seat to both.

There's all this, plus more fiction from Adam Lee, another delve into the imposing *Dragon* archive, and all our regulars like maps of the month, a selection of the best D&D video and audio highlights, and much more!

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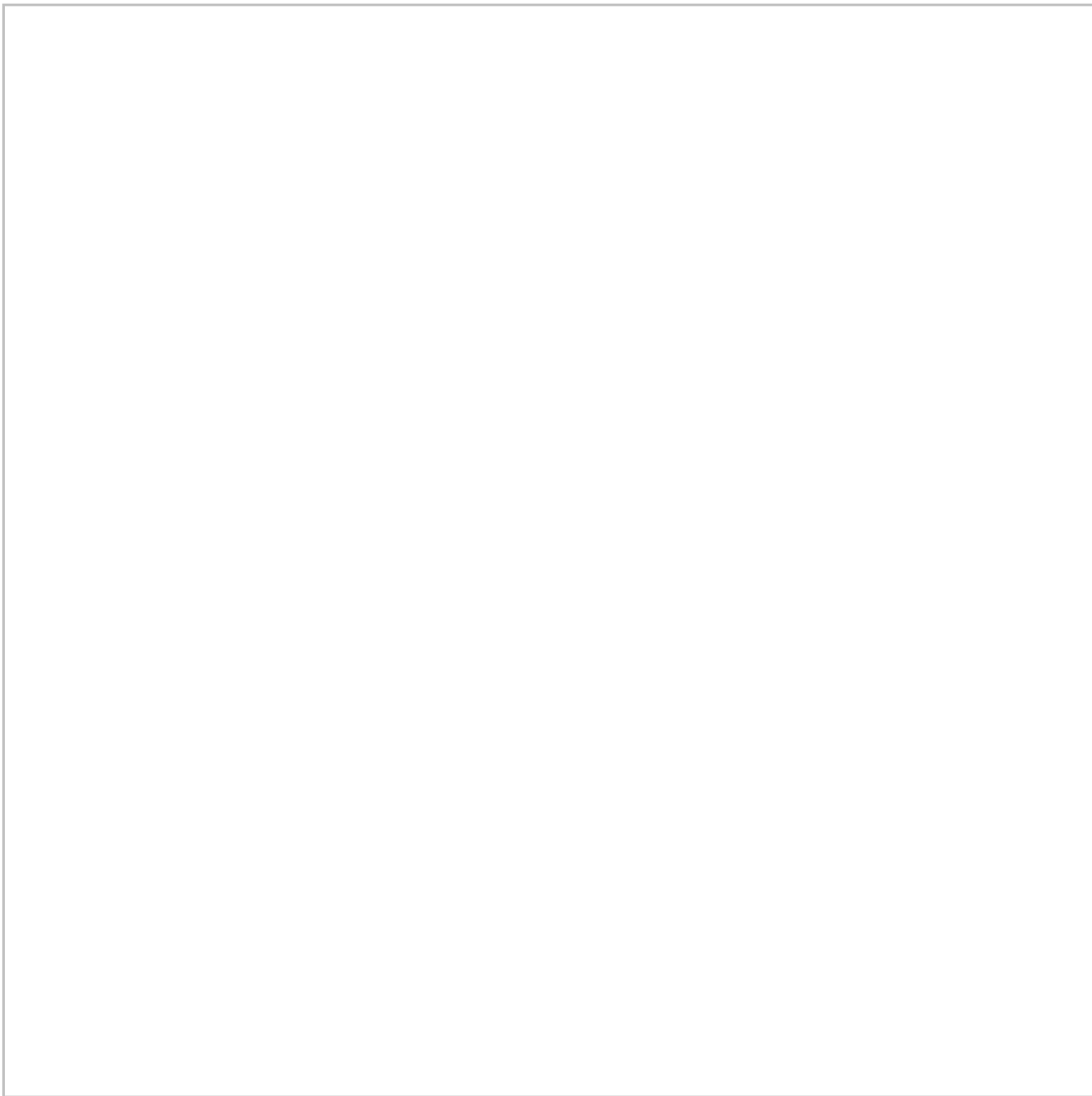
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